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VOLUME THREE

SUPPORTING STUDIES

PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA PROJECT

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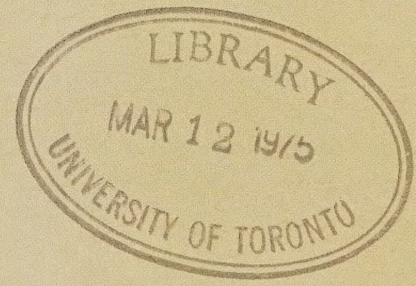
The Peace- Athabasca Delta Project

General publications
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TECHNICAL APPENDICES
VOLUME 3, 1973

SUPPORTING STUDIES

Prepared by
The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project Group
Canada Alberta Saskatchewan



A CO-OPERATIVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL STUDY ESTABLISHED BY THE
ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTERS OF CANADA, ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN

HON. W. J. YURKO
for Alberta

HON. JACK DAVIS
for Canada

HON. N. E. BYERS
for Saskatchewan

Foreword

In January 1971, the Governments of Canada, Alberta, and Saskatchewan established a cooperative interdisciplinary study group to investigate and report on the cause and effects of low water levels in Lake Athabasca. The focus of the investigations was directed towards determining the effects of low levels on the Peace-Athabasca Delta located at the West end of Lake Athabasca and on the people of the area.

The information contained in this report covers the supporting studies carried out under the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. The complete report consists of:

Summary Report, 1972
Technical Report
Volume 1. Hydrologic Investigations
Volume 2. Ecological Investigations
Volume 3. Support Studies

The Technical Report provides a detailed analysis of the cause and effects of the low water levels and recommendations for remedial action. Volumes 1 and 2 contain detailed reports on the hydrologic and ecological investigations. The Summary Report, based on the Technical Report but presented in non-technical language for public distribution, briefly describes the various technical and management aspects of the Project.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project coordinated the support studies presented in Volume 3 and provided logistic and office support. The first paper is an historical account of the major events which have contributed to the development of Fort Chipewyan and the surrounding Delta Region. The second study, a socio-economic overview, discussed the demographic characteristic and economic activities of the region, focusing on Fort Chipewyan.

The Peace-Athabasca Legal Framework Study describes the relevant federal and provincial legislation in force just before construction of the Bennett Dam and assesses the effectiveness of this legislation as an acceptable framework for regulating major developments and resolving intergovernmental disputes arising from them.

In Section D, Social and Economic data from Indian settlements with a population and economic base similar to Fort Chipewyan were compared in order to place the problems of the community in perspective.

The fifth appendix is an assessment of current recreation and tourism activities in the Lake Athabasca Region, particularly in the Saskatchewan portion. Several potential development opportunities are identified.

The contribution of all individuals and agencies participating in the preparation of these reports is gratefully acknowledged.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project Group adopted the policy that the participating agencies were responsible for editing the individual reports prepared for the project. The views and opinions expressed in the appendices are therefore not necessarily those of the Project Group.

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Delta Region
R.G. Wuetherick, Department of History, University
of Alberta, Edmonton, 1972.
- B A Socio-Economic Study of Fort Chipewyan and the
Peace-Athabasca Delta Region
Moncrieff, Montgomery & Associates, Ltd. Edmonton, 1971.
- C Peace-Athabasca Legal Framework Study
L. Shaw, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, 1971.
- D Peace-Athabasca Study of Socio-Economic Characteristics
of Fort Chipewyan
Allison Gill, Department of Geography, University of
Alberta, Edmonton, 1972.
- E A Recreation and Tourism Study of Lake Athabasca and
Environs
EPEC Consulting Limited, Edmonton, 1972.

SECTION A

A HISTORY OF FORT CHIPEWYAN AND
THE PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA REGION

A paper commissioned by the Peace-Athabasca
Delta Project and prepared under its auspices
and under the supervision of J.G. MacGregor, P.Eng.

by
Robert G. Wuetherick

PREFACE

This history of Fort Chipewyan and its environs — particularly the region to the west and south of Lake Athabasca — has been written entirely under the auspices of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. The project has from January 1971 been conducting a meticulous study of all conditions in the region of the lake. In an effort to achieve a completely comprehensive end product, the project has thought it advisable to commission a paper that would clearly delimit the social, economic, and historical processes that have gone into moulding the region into its present form. The writing of this paper has been made possible solely through the resources of the project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to many people and libraries for assistance in completing this work. A great deal of material has been gathered from the shelves of Edmonton's excellent libraries: The University of Alberta's Cameron Library, Edmonton's Centennial Library, and the Provincial Legislature Library. I am indebted to Eric Holmgren, the provincial librarian, who allowed me to study some of the early Fort Chipewyan journals in his possession. Various provincial government departments have provided me with information and I am particularly grateful to the staff of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta.

Perhaps the greatest single factor in enabling me to grasp the conditions under which the fur trade of a century and a half ago was carried on has been the generous indulgence of the Hudson's Bay Company as extended to me by Mrs. J. Craig, the London archivist, in permitting me to study and to publish extracts from the microfilms of their tremendous archival material now in the Public Archives of Canada. The extracts quoted are published by permission of the Hudson's Bay Company and I am most grateful for it. Moreover, as serious students usually are, I am under great obligation to the staff of the Public Archives of Canada for their kindness and help.

I have had access to various publications bearing on problems in the Peace-Athabasca Delta and I am indebted to their authors. Among others, Mr. W.B. Hunter of the Northern Transportation Company Limited has been most helpful. Furthermore, I have obtained a great deal of valuable information as

a result of the patience afforded me by many of the leading citizens of Fort Chipewyan, who did all they could to help me gain some appreciation of the background of that fascinating community; Reverend Father François Cuff of the Mission de la Nativité, Reverend B.F. Osborne of the Anglican Mission, Howard Wylie, Noel McKay, Reg McKay, Sonny Flett, J. Mercredi, Lawrence Yanek, are among the many who gave me of their time and knowledge.

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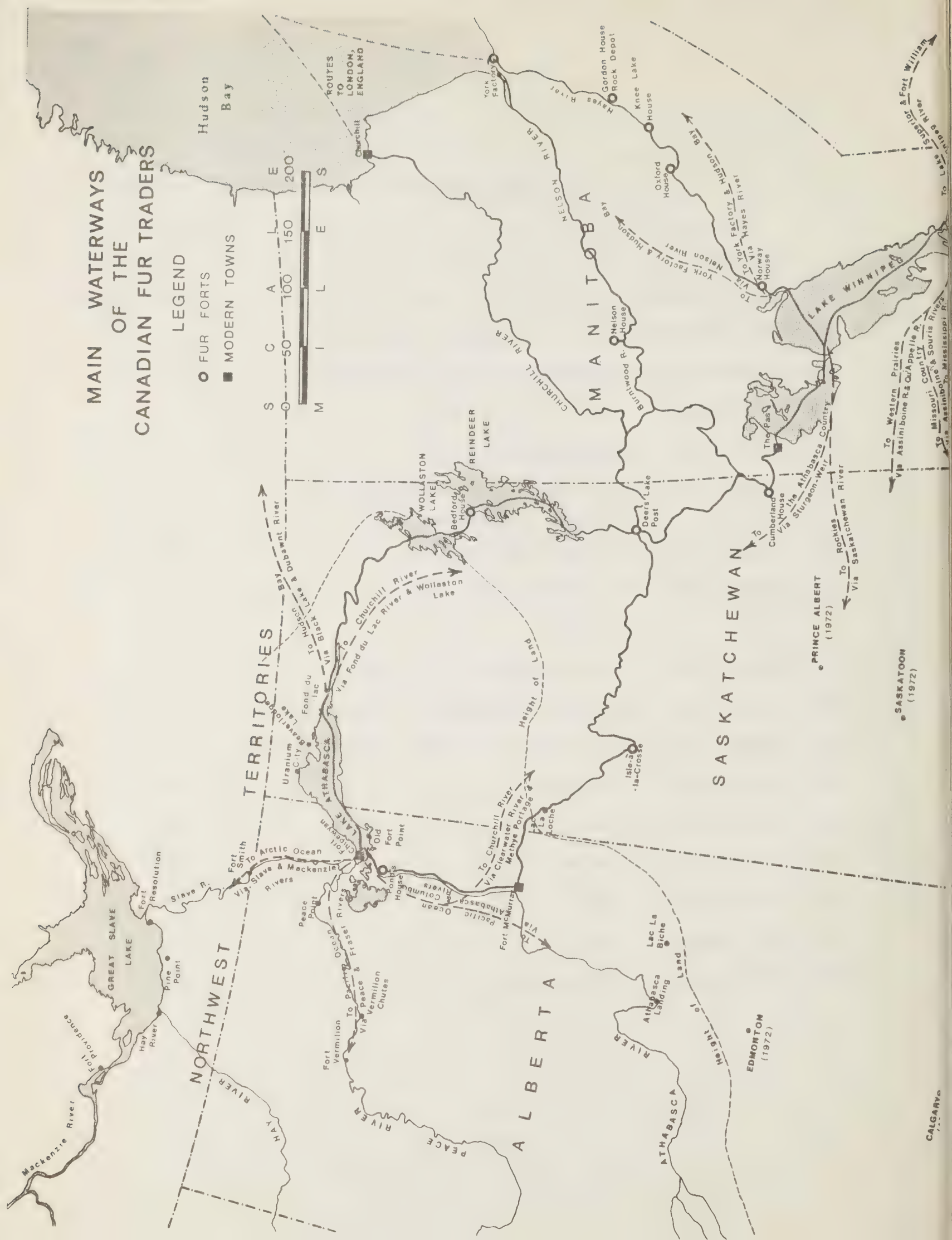
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MAIN WATERWAYS

LEGEND

● FUR FORTS

MODERN TOWNS



A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORY OF FORT CHIPEWYAN

1715. William Stuart of the Hudson's Bay Company, while on a mission to secure peace between warring Indian tribes, became the first European to enter the Mackenzie Drainage System, but he probably did not enter Alberta.
- Dec. Samuel Hearne left Churchill on an overland journey to the mouth of
1770. the Coppermine River in July. He returned to Churchill June 30, 1772, crossing Great Slave Lake enroute. He was the first explorer to enter the Athabasca District; he named Lake Athabasca "Lake of the Hills", and gave us the first description of the basin.
1778. Peter Pond was guided across the Methye Portage, and descended the Athabasca River in the summer to establish Pond's House, the first fort in the Arctic Drainage System and Alberta's first European settlement. Hearne's title for Lake Athabasca then fell into disuse, and the Cree name for "where there are reeds" (referring to the Delta area) was adopted.
1788. Alexander Mackenzie, when put in charge of the Athabasca region for the North West Company, had his cousin Roderick relocate Pond's House to a point on the south shore of Lake Athabasca; the new fort was called Fort Chipewyan and is at our Old Fort Point. Fort Chipewyan then became the center of the trade carried on by the Chipewyan and Cree Indians of the area.
- 1789, Alexander Mackenzie, in seeking to facilitate the transporting to
June 3. market of Athabasca District furs, set out on a voyage of exploration down the great river that became named after him. He returned to Fort Chipewyan in mid-September.
- 1790 - The surveyors, Philip Turnor and Peter Fidler, were in the region,
1792. surveying the Athabasca River below the mouth of the Clearwater River, as well as Lake Athabasca, the Slave River, and some of the south shore of Great Slave Lake. They were the first Hudson's Bay Company men in the area, and were there at the behest of the British Government in order to check the accuracy of Pond's map of the area, and not to trade.
- 1792, Alexander Mackenzie left Fort Chipewyan on his second voyage of
Oct. 10. exploration, travelled up the Peace River and reached the Pacific Ocean in July, 1793, returning to Fort Chipewyan in September, 1793.

- 1799. The XY Company established itself in Athabasca; the location of its fort is unknown.
- 1802. Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company returned to Lake Athabasca in a trading capacity and built a trading fort there, Nottingham House on English Island.
- 1803. According to some sources the North West Company's fort was moved to its present site. Fort Chipewyan soon became next in importance after Fort William among the North West Company's posts.
- 1804. The XY Company was absorbed by the North West Company. The first horses arrived in Fort Chipewyan from the Peace River district.
- 1806. The fur trade competition was so stiff that Peter Fidler was forced to abandon Nottingham House and leave the district to the North West Company.
- 1815. John Clarke and a number of Hudson's Bay Company men returned to Lake Athabasca and built Fort Wedderburn on Potatoe Island. The period of the bitter fur trade rivalry entered its second and final stage.
- 1819 - Captain John Franklin and his crew explored the Arctic coast from the
1822 Coppermine River eastwards, but experienced difficulty in getting supplies from the competing fur trade companies. His party arrived in Fort Chipewyan on March 22, 1820, and left on July 18th for the far north via Slave River, returning to Britain in 1822.
- 1821, The North West Company was absorbed by the Hudson's Bay Company, ending
Mar.26. the fur trade rivalry. The Hudson's Bay Company abandoned Fort Wedderburn in favour of Fort Chipewyan.
- 1825, Franklin and his expedition arrived at Fort Chipewyan on their way to
July 15. continue exploration of the Arctic Coast from the Coppermine River west to Icy Cape, Alaska.
- 1826. The Hudson's Bay Company withdrew liquor from the trade at Fort Chipewyan.
- 1833, Captain George Back — in an overland quest to determine the fate of
July 29. John Ross in the missing Victory — was in Fort Chipewyan.
- 1837, Thomas Simpson and others left Fort Chipewyan on a Hudson's Bay
June 1. Company-sponsored expedition to survey the Arctic coastline from the point surveyed by Franklin to Point Barrow and Repulse Bay.
- 1847. The first Roman Catholic missionary, Father Taché, was in Fort Chipewyan for a visit.
- 1849. Father Faraud chose the site for Fort Chipewyan's Catholic mission.
- 1851. The Nativity Mission was dedicated at Fort Chipewyan.
- 1866. Church of England clergymen visited Fort Chipewyan.
- 1869. The Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly of the fur trade in Rupert's Land

ended.

1872. Roderick MacFarlane of the Hudson's Bay Company constructed solid timber buildings at Fort Chipewyan that remained in use until 1940.
1874. The Reverend Arthur Shaw and his wife established the Church of England Mission in Fort Chipewyan. Members of the Montreal Sisters of Charity arrived in Fort Chipewyan, and made a start toward establishing at the Nativity Mission a school, an orphanage, and a hospital.
1875. Botanist John Macoun of the Geological Survey of Canada explored the Lake Athabasca region and gave us our first scientific account of the region. He brought back samples of the grain grown at the Nativity Mission, grain that received awards at the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876.
1880. St. Paul's Anglican Church was opened in Fort Chipewyan; it is still in use today.
- 1881 - Captain J.M. Smith built the Grahame at Fort McMurray, the first
1882. steamer to be used in the Athabasca District.
1884. A transportation depot was built at Athabasca Landing; it was the first of many developments in transportation, all of which served to lessen and eventually eliminate Fort Chipewyan's importance as a depot.
1898. Depredations associated with the Klondike Gold Rush resulted in demands for recognition of the Indians' rights.
1899. Treaty No. 8 was signed in the area about Fort Chipewyan with the Beaver, Slavey, Cree, and Chipewyan Indians. The North West Mounted Police established a post at Fort Chipewyan.
1920. The Alberta Great Waterways Railway reached Waterways, near Fort McMurray.
1922. The boundaries and organization of Wood Buffalo National Park were established by Federal Government Order-in-Council.
1926. Commercial fishing began on Lake Athabasca.
1928. The first seaplane arrived at Fort Chipewyan.
1929. C.H. Dickins of Western Canada Airways inaugurated regular scheduled air service to Fort Chipewyan and other northern communities.
1934. Gold was discovered in the area of Saskatchewan that came to be known as Goldfields.
1935. The Northern Transportation Company came into being, primarily to serve the Eldorado Mine at Port Radium on Great Bear Lake.

- 1937. Gold was discovered in the Beaverlodge area of Saskatchewan.
- 1940. The Chipewyan Band chose and was awarded a reservation. The Cree of the region have yet to decide on a site for a reservation.
- 1951. Logging operations began in Wood Buffalo National Park.
- 1953. Mining operations began in Uranium City.
- 1954. The Department of Indian Affairs built a school at Fort Chipewyan, beginning the secularization of the Indians' education.
- 1958. The Hudson's Bay Company's Mackenzie River Transport ended nearly 75 years of service.
- 1959. Electric lights were installed in homes in Fort Chipewyan.
- 1961. The Northlands School Division was created.
- 1962. A Department of Lands and Forests airstrip was built at Fort Chipewyan. Telephones were installed in the community's homes.
- 1963. A vocational wing was added to the Department of Indian Affairs' school, and the whole building renamed the Bishop Piché School.
- 1965, May 19. A Pacific Western Airlines DC-6 inaugurated commercial air service on Fort Chipewyan's new airport. The airport was officially opened on June 18.
- 1967. The W.A.C. Bennett Dam was completed.
- 1970. A waterworks plant was completed in Fort Chipewyan.

INTRODUCTION

The area about Lake Athabasca has always presented an enormous challenge to anyone who has ever attempted to live there, whether it be the native peoples — principally the Chipewyan, Beaver, and, later, Cree — who first called it home, or the whites whose interest in the area was aroused by its potential and who sought to meet the same challenge. The history of Fort Chipewyan is to a very large extent the story of the degree to which success has been achieved in meeting that challenge. Such a history begins with the people who with incredibly meagre resources pioneered over the course of many centuries in the difficult task of extracting a living from the area. Their knowledge and willingness to share it were essential to both the white man's entry into the region itself, and his initiation into the art of living in it. Had it not been for the Indians' encyclopedic knowledge of local conditions, the maze that was the Mackenzie basin at that time would only with enormous effort have revealed its secrets to the white fur traders.

With the advent of the white race into the area, the leisurely pace of its history took on a frenetic aspect with the fur-trade rivalry, only to slacken somewhat with the return of the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly to the west. The pace took on a more dignified aspect with the arrival of white men whose goals were not the securing of furs but the saving of souls. The numerous scientists and geologists who next entered the area did not alter the pace, but those who came in their wake to exploit their basic discoveries — notably the prospectors and miners — did. The story next deals with the

changes in transportation patterns that caused Fort Chipewyan to lose its former importance, and with that development the settlement gracefully became contented with its role as a strategically placed northern community on the route to places that have inherited the frenzied activity that is now passé in Fort Chipewyan, among them being the Klondike.

But, the first element of a community's history must be its geographical setting, and it is to that that we now turn.

CHAPTER ONE

A Geographical Overview

The influences geography can exert upon our way of life are much less than they were for our forefathers. We have the means of overcoming most of the impediments put in our way by nature and need not unduly concern ourselves with matters that were of vital importance to the people who first entered the Mackenzie watershed, matters such as topography, the waterways, and climate. Descriptions of the basin have been ours since the time Samuel Hearne visited it in 1771. To his account have been added those of every explorer and fur trader who followed him, but we, in setting down a basic summary of the region's geography, will give attention not to their writings, but to those of a much later coterie of explorers. We will base our account upon those first truly scientific and fully comprehensive examinations made by members of the Geological Survey of Canada.

We will begin with an overall view of the basin.¹ The giant Mackenzie river basin crosses 16 degrees of latitude between the 53rd and the 69th parallels, and 36 degrees of longitude between the 104th and the 140th

1 This account follows very closely the excellent monograph written by Charles Camshell and Wyatt Malcolm, "The Mackenzie River Basin", Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 108, Number 92, Geological Series, Ottawa (1919).

All works referred to, in addition to being cited in the footnotes, will be found in the bibliography of each chapter. The bibliographies begin on p. 160.

meridians.² Its width ranges from 100 miles at the mouth of the Mackenzie River, to 900 miles near the basin's centre. Possessing a total drainage area of 682,000 square miles (approximately one-fifth of Canada's area), the basin comprises parts of three physiographic provinces: the Laurentian Plateau on the east, the Great Plains in the centre, and the Cordilleran region to the west. It is the most northerly portion of the Great Central Plain that forms the greatest part of the basin, and the remainder is equally divided between the Laurentian plateau on the east, and the Cordilleran region on the west.

An important feature of the plateau is its innumerable lakes of all sizes. The northern extension of the Great Central Plain that borders it also possesses numerous lakes and tracts of muskeg scattered about within the region's alternating stretches of forest and open prairie. The drainage of most of this latter region is such that it is only in a few places — notably along the valleys of the Peace, Slave, and Liard rivers, and the Mackenzie above the mouth of the Liard — that agriculture on a large scale is possible.³ The Cordilleran region discharges three important streams into the basin, the Athabasca, Peace, and Liard rivers, only the first two of which figure in this study.

That part of the physiography of the Mackenzie basin of most importance to the history of the communities lying within it ~~is~~ its rivers, for they served as natural highways. Those rivers that figure most prominently in the history of Fort Chipewyan are the Athabasca and the Peace. The former drains an area of 58,900 square miles, and, from its headwaters to Lake Athabasca, measures 765 miles. Even though the number of rapids along its course render

2 Ibid., p. 1.

3 Ibid., p. 21.

ready navigation impossible, the river is normally open to traffic — if adequate stratagems are employed — for most of its length.

The Peace River is the largest and longest of the tributaries of the Mackenzie River and is formed at the junction of the Findlay and Parsnip Rivers. Its drainage basin is 117,000 square miles, and its length from the sources of the Findlay to its junction with the Slave River is 1,065 miles. An interesting feature of the Peace River at this point is that in ordinary stages of water it discharges directly into the Slave River, but in flood time much of it flows by way of the Quatre Fourches River into the western end of Lake Athabasca, and from there by the Rochers River into the Slave. And it is the Peace River's heavy flood-time burden of sediment that has formed the delta at the western end of Lake Athabasca, cutting off Lake Claire from the main portion of the Lake.

Entering Lake Athabasca at its upper end, draining much of northern Saskatchewan and bringing its tribute from as far to the east as Wollaston Lake, some forty miles west of the Manitoba border, the Fond du Lac River forms another arm of the four major waterways which more or less intersect in the famous delta. Fort Chipewyan, therefore, on the west end of Lake Athabasca forms the hub of radiating waterways coming from or leading to the barren lands to the east, the fertile prairies to the south, the Rocky Mountains to the west, and the Arctic coast to the north.

With the entry of the waterways into our account of the region's geography we are able to turn our attention from the overall view of the Mackenzie basin to a much more pleasantly restricted one, that of the immediate surroundings of Fort Chipewyan. To one living there, the most important aspects of its geography are Lake Athabasca and the vast delta to the west of it.

Lake Athabasca is the southernmost of the great lakes of the Mackenzie basin, the others being Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes. Discovered by Samuel Hearne in 1771, it went for several years under the name he gave it, "The Lake of the Hills". When the wintering partners of the North West Company entered the region seven years later, it was given its present name, which is Cree for "where there are reeds", referring to the delta area. It lies in the Laurentian Plateau near the point where the latter borders on the Great Plains. The lake is about 195 miles long, and at its greatest width measures 35 miles. Its area is over 3,000 square miles. Lake Athabasca's northern shoreline, containing as it does many long, narrow, and irregular bays, is largely responsible for the lake's shoreline possessing what Alcock calls an "excessive length" of over 750 miles.⁴ He estimates that the lake's shoreline would increase by some 150 miles were its numerous islands to be included. The lake's surface is 688.3 feet above the sea, and, while Camsell and Malcolm⁵ speak of its depth never having been determined, Alcock writes that "A depth of 300 feet is probably a conservative estimate for the maximum depth of Lake Athabaska."⁶

The south shore of the lake rises "more or less abruptly" to a sandy plain whose maximum height is 500 feet above the lake.⁷ The north shore is much the more rugged of the two, being what Alcock calls "a monotonous

4 F.J. Alcock, "The Origin of Lake Athabaska", The Geographical Review, vol. X, no. 6 (December 1920), p.400; see also his "Geology of the North Shore of Lake Athabaska, Alberta and Saskatchewan", Geological Survey of Canada, Summary Report, 1914, pp. 60-1.

5 Camsell and Malcolm, p.37.

6 "The Origin of Lake Athabaska", p. 406. Alcock was correct, for the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project attributes to the lake a maximum depth of 400 feet.

7 Camsell and Malcolm, p.37.

region of low rocky hills and ridges, separated by depressions which for the most part are occupied by lakes ~~or~~ muskeg swamps."⁸ Only a few of these rounded and forested hills are more than 300 feet in height.

Coming a close second to the importance of the physical features of a region is its climate. The fact that the basin is removed from the cooling influence of the frozen waters of Hudson Bay and was in consequence warmer than regions farther east was of little comfort to the people who lived in Fort Chipewyan. In the fur trade era the post had a reputation for being a very cold spot indeed. Colin Campbell, making his Fort Vermilion district report for 1822-1823, wrote: "The climate [here] is very severe, but considered much more mild than at the Athabasca Lake."⁹ The ice in the waters about the Fort Chipewyan area considerably retard the advent of spring, but the transition from winter to spring was not without its pleasant quirks. A writer of a much later age recalled one such time of year when, "It was so warm that one could have walked around naked, even on the ice of Lake Athabaska, with only a pair of shoes for protection against the sharp ice."¹⁰

The rivers in the area usually begin to flow near the end of April. The western end of the lake begins freeing itself some weeks later, and the eastern part much later than that. William Brown, a Hudson's Bay Company

8 "Origin of Lake Athabaska", p. 400; for a description of the region's muskeg, see Hugh M. Raup's Botanical Investigations in Wood Buffalo Park, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 74, Biological Series, No. 20 (1935), p. 35.

9 Hudson's Bay Company Archives, B. 224/e/1. Henceforth, the use of Hudson's Bay Company Archives will be identified by the letter and numeral designation, leaving the words "Hudson's Bay Company Archives" as understood.

10 Erik Munsterhjelm, Fool's Gold, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited (1957), pp. 54-55.

employee at Fort Chipewyan, reported in May 1821, that the ice in his end of the lake usually begins to break up from the 15th to the 19th of May, "but the east end where the water is much deeper it is seldom or never open before the first of June."¹¹ One of the earliest of the few records available to us from Fond du Lac, the Hudson's Bay Company's post on the east end of the lake, indicates that in 1859 the ice was still solid in the lake by June 14th.¹² The cooling influence of the lake notwithstanding, summer days can be very hot indeed. This season, however, lasts perhaps three months before making a transition into what most people consider to be the most pleasant time of year in Fort Chipewyan — the autumn. Moderate temperatures and the end of the insect plague when combined with autumn's fantastic array of colours make it a delight to experience. But this season too does not last very long, and some years it is inordinately short. Roderick McKenzie recorded that September 30, 1816, was "One of the severest days that I have witnessed at this season of the year, the ground covered with Snow 3 1/2 inches deep, blowing very fresh and extremely Cold."¹³ Brown, however, sets us straight on what is the norm for the onset of winter:

There are instances of the lake being fast in the middle of October, but these are reckoned very early seasons — in the beginning of November there are usually great quantities of ice driving on the lake, but it is most commonly the 15th before it is sufficiently strong for people to walk upon it, and some years it is even as late as the end of the month.¹⁴

11 William Brown, Report of the Athabasca Lake District, 1820-1821, B. 39/e/3.

12 B. 72/a/1.

13 "Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca", B. 39/a/8.

14 B. 39/e/3.

Brown added that it was usual for winter's severest cold to appear after Christmas, and Camsell and Malcolm point out that January temperatures in the southern part of the basin can drop to 45 degrees below zero, and in the northern parts to 60 degrees below zero.¹⁵

Our highly defined knowledge of the geography and climate of the Mackenzie basin was the result of several decades' sedulous accumulation of data. The earliest white venturers into the region possessed very little knowledge indeed of the area they cautiously explored; nor was a great deal more known nearly a century later when the first representative of the Geological Survey of Canada entered the region. In 1875 Alfred Selwyn was given the task of making an exploratory trip into northern British Columbia. Accompanying the expedition in the role of botanist was Professor John Macoun. When the party reached Fort St. John, Macoun and another member of the team proceeded down the Peace River with the intention of making some observations and of returning with the upward bound Hudson's Bay Company's autumn brigade. The brigade turned out to be much later than the two expected, and they determined to push on to Fort Chipewyan. Not being properly provisioned for such an extension to the planned trip, the two suffered a great deal of privation in travelling on to the settlement, but they finally reached it, "the day before the boats left there."¹⁶

The Hudson's Bay Company officials in Fort Chipewyan advised him to

15 Op. cit., p. 44.

16 John Macoun, "Geological and Topographical Notes on the Lower Peace and Athabasca Rivers", Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress, 1875-76, part V, appendix I, p. 87. In the ensuing citations a distinction will be made between the "Notes" (pp. 87-95), that deal almost exclusively with the immediate environs of Fort Chipewyan, and his more comprehensive "Report", on pp. 110-185 of the same publication.

abandon his original plan of returning to Fort St. John because of the imminence of winter, and that he make his leave of the country through the route by which the country was originally opened up to Europeans, that is, by travelling along the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers, crossing the Methye portage, and going past Fort Carlton to Fort Garry. It was thus that the first report of the Geological Survey of Canada on the region that is the focus of our study was to be written. Besides giving us the first and an excellent account of the vegetation of the delta and western end of the lake ever made,¹⁷ he was able by a unique set of circumstances to make a very important contribution to other aspects of our knowledge of the area, for all the Hudson's Bay Company's northern personnel were gathered there in connection with the autumn brigade, and Macoun was able to benefit a great deal from their accumulated experience. "Coming, as I did, when all the men from the northern posts were all in, I obtained more accurate knowledge of the vast interior than had been obtained by any former explorer."¹⁸ It is for the value of his own observations and for what he was able to cull from his interlocutors that we have chosen to base our description of that portion of the region about Fort Chipewyan most frequented by those who visited and lived there.

As he approached Lake Athabasca from the west, Macoun's first impression was of the changing nature of the Peace River. "Below Peace Point", he wrote, "the land is very low, and the river spreads out like a lake, studded with islands; the shores are no longer sand, but mud, and the traveller has much difficulty in putting to land, owing to its depth." He had, of course,

17 Raup, op. cit., p. 3.

18 Ibid., "Report", p. 164.

entered the region of the delta.

The whole country around the south and west sides of Lake Athabasca is a vast alluvial plain, elevated but a few feet above the level of the lake, and some years much of it remains permanently flooded. The first night after leaving Fort Chipewyan, we slept in the boats owing to the lowness of the¹⁹ land, which was not more than a foot above the water.

Once beyond the Quatre Fourches he found himself in the western end of Lake Athabasca, and commented often on the rocky character of the islands and shore of the lake. Its rocky nature is attested to by Macoun's estimation of the site's agricultural potential:

Fort Chipewyan is not well suited for agricultural purposes. With the exception of the small spot of garden ground near the fort, the vicinity shows only glaciated Laurentian rocks, covered with a small²⁰ growth of Banksian pine rooting in the crevices.

Racing against the onset of winter, Macoun left Fort Chipewyan shortly thereafter and reached Fort Carlton in November, ending the first official, albeit extemporized, Canadian government exploration of the Lake Athabasca region.²¹ Many more were to follow, and their cumulative effect, when carried into the age of the airplane, was to leave this part of the north in possession of very few of its once numerous secrets.

But such refinements of learning were a very long way off when seen from the point of view of the first white men to enter the region. To them,

19 "Notes", p. 90.

20 "Report", p. 165.

21 For a description of the work of all the explorers of the Mackenzie basin from the earliest times until 1919, and an extensive bibliography of their publications, see Camshell and Malcolm, op. cit., pp. 2-5 for the former, and 5-9 for the latter.

the Lake Athabasca region in no way lacked for secrets; indeed, the very means of waterborne entry into it was unknown for the longest time. Whatever knowledge the earliest white travellers into the region came to possess came not from any books, as would likely be the source of ours, but from the people they found inhabiting the area, the people who were to school the newcomers in the art of travelling and living in the harsh environment we have just briefly examined. Without the assistance of the natives, the first steps in making sense of the maze that was then the Mackenzie basin could not have been possible. The identity, and earliest known history of these people forms the substance of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Some Aspects of the Aboriginal History of the Peace-Athabasca Delta

Any examination of the history of Canada's Indian population before its contact with the white race must be reconciled to the fact that almost all we can hope to know of their existence has as its original source the writings of those first Europeans to come in contact with Canada's natives. We must have recourse to such sources because the Canadian Indians left no written records or other clues as to their culture, such as architectural remains.¹ There are parts of Canada that have reasonably satisfactory archaeological remains in the form of natives' tools and basketry, the richest such collections being in the more southern parts of Canada, and the Arctic and sub-Arctic coastlines. But the tribes with whom we are most concerned, those of the Mackenzie river basin, have left us almost no such articles.² Nor is the oral transmission of Indian traditions entirely satisfactory, as John C. Ewers points out.³ Such traditions, he writes,

1 Diamond Jenness, The Indians of Canada, p. 216: the full citation for this and most of the other books used will be found in the bibliography for Chapter Two.

2 Ibid., pp. 216-217, and 225.

3 "When Red and White Men Met", The Western Historical Quarterly, vol. 11, no. 2 (April 1971), pp. 133-150.

tell us a great deal about their traditional beliefs and cultural values. But the origins and ages of most of these traditions are unknown, and their contents are susceptible to elaboration, contraction, or distortion with each mouth-to-ear transmission. They offer no reliable substitute for the written word.⁴

We must therefore reconcile ourselves to the paradox that most of what we know of the history of those tribes in pre-European times has come down to us precisely as a result of that contact.

Of Canada's fifty or more tribes, those that lived in the Mackenzie basin faced unique conditions and developed cultural traits different from those tribes that lived in other parts of the country. The cultural area of the Mackenzie basin presented such harsh conditions and possessed so few resources capable of being utilized by technologically primitive peoples that the tribes living in it were necessarily of a scanty population and, partly because of the region's isolation from centres of more advanced culture, were among the most primitive in the country.⁵ There are nearly a dozen tribes in the Mackenzie basin: the Sekani are found at the head of the Peace River, and the Beaver lower down its course; the Chipewyan claimed as their area the region between Hudson Bay, the Athabasca River, and Great Slave Lake; the Yellowknives were their northern neighbours, and lived to the northeast of Great Slave Lake; to the west of them were the Dogrib who inhabited the region between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes; the region along the Mackenzie River from Great Slave Lake almost to Fort Norman was the home of the Slaves, and from that point to the ramparts of that great river were to be found the Hare Indians. The Nahani tribes of the Rocky mountains and the Kutchin tribes of

⁴ Ibid., p. 136; Jenness, pp. 193-5, says their principal value lies in their usefulness as means of studying Indian tribes' movements.

⁵ Jenness, p. 9.

the far northern tributaries of the Mackenzie River complete the list.⁶

These tribes are among the fourteen that comprise the Athapaskan linguistic group. The various dialects among the group are sufficiently similar as to be mutually intelligible, a factor much appreciated by all the whites who lived and worked in the region. The Athapaskan language is the most complex of all the Canadian native languages, a seemingly anomalous occurrence as those who developed it were among the country's most primitive tribes. It is possible that those of the Athapaskan linguistic group were the last of Canada's natives to enter the country,⁷ and the nature of the language is such that it has been identified with eastern Asian languages, although this is a matter of controversy among experts.⁸ The complexity of the language may explain why those who spoke it were able to resist making changes in it when confronted with other Indian cultures.

A link between the language and the environment of those who spoke it is the fact that the conditions of life in the Mackenzie basin were such as to preclude the possibility of developing oratory to a fine art, as was the case in most other parts of Canada.

Among the primitive northern tribes alone eloquence counted for little, because there the struggle for existence was so constant and the political organization so tenuous that prestige and authority came only from outstanding personality combined with physical prowess, success in hunting or accredited influence over the spiritual world.⁹

6 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

7 Ibid., p. 246.

8 Ibid., pp. 377 and 21.

9 Ibid., p. 200.

The harshness of life in the Mackenzie basin is further attested to by the fact that only in that region did adults eschew a deliberate regimen designed to toughen their youths, as was the case everywhere else.¹⁰

Success in hunting took second place to no other skill when it came to making a living in the region inhabited by the northern tribes. The resources of the area were such that berries and roots and other such foods played a singularly minor role in the diet of the Barren Lands Indians, and the subsequent utter dependence upon animals made hunting and fishing the focal points of their lives. Moose, caribou, wild fowl, and fish were of necessity the mainstays of their diet, although the smaller animals — hare, for instance — were of course not ignored. While the numbers of such creatures were very large, procuring them required all the exertion and ingenuity at the Indians' command, and had its influence in moulding every aspect of their lives.

The lives of the northern Indians revolved about the cyclical nature of animal migrations and seasonal change, and was therefore itself migratory. The Chipewyan followed the caribou into the wooded lands in the winter, and retraced their steps into the barren grounds with the advent of spring. The caribou were impounded during the winter in enclosures of saplings and brush, and in the summer were either forced into lakes and rivers to be speared from canoes, or driven against a line of concealed archers. Snares too were employed for the capture of caribou and moose.¹¹ The Hare Indians of the lower Mackenzie River had no caribou, and in the summer when the Arctic hare could not be trapped, would wander from one fishing place to another.¹²

10 Ibid., p. 153.

11 Ibid., p. 59.

12 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

Maintaining a migratory existence in the area about Lake Athabasca would have been exhaustive in itself, even without allowing for the necessity of garnering a living from a harsh environment while doing so. Travel in the winter was probably easier than in the summer, for the snow and ice allowed the use of snowshoes and sleds to haul goods about. The Chipewyan were the only Indians of the Mackenzie basin to use dogs for hauling toboggans, but they did so only rarely.¹³ Where waterways made its use possible, a bark canoe was employed; otherwise, goods had to be carried about, or dragged. Canoes made of spruce bark predominated in the Mackenzie basin. The very means of transportation available to the northern Indians determined the amount of possessions they were free to accumulate; frequent movement with primitive vehicles over very rough terrain naturally limited the amount of goods any family could own.

Such a migratory and hunting-oriented existence made it imperative that the men, upon whom devolved the responsibility for mastering the skills required for successful hunting, be left free from the performance of less exalted but fully as exhaustive pursuits. This meant that nearly every task outside the realm of hunting fell upon the women. Matonabbee, the Chipewyan Indian who guided Samuel Hearne to the Coppermine River, made a famous comment on the status of women in his society. Women, he said, are made for labour, "one of them can carry, or haul, as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, [and] keep us warm at night...."¹⁴

13 Ibid., p. 104n.

14 J.B. Tyrrell (ed), A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean In the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772, pp. 101-102.

To which comment Hearne added:

when the men kill any large beast, the women are always sent to bring it to the tent: when it is brought there, every operation it undergoes, such as splitting, drying, pounding, &c. is performed by the women.

It then fell to their lot to cook the meal, then stand aside until all the males, even the very lowest in status, had eaten their fill, sometimes to the women's misfortune: "In times of scarcity it is frequently their lot to be left without a single morsel."¹⁵ With such in mind, Hearne's conclusion is hardly to be disputed: "the whole course of their lives is one continued scene of drudgery...."¹⁶

The tools available to the labouring sex before the days of the European contact were very limited. The primary tool of all Canadian Indians was the knife. Throughout most of the country it was made of stone, but in the Mackenzie basin this essential of existence usually had a blade of beaver teeth or caribou antler. Among the Yellowknives, Chipewyan, and some of the Dogrib, it was not uncommon for the blades to be made of native copper.¹⁷ The handle was of wood or bone, and the knife came in various sizes, according to the function it was designed to fulfill. Chipewyan needs in tools beyond the knife comprised only a hatchet, an ice-chisel, and a file.¹⁸ It was because the Indians' stone knives and axes could not match metal implements for strength or keenness of edge that steel knives and hatchets were the trade

15 Ibid., pp. 129-130.

16 Ibid., pp. 319-320.

17 Jenness, p. 34n; while this is true, the author points out that since the natives possessed no knowledge of the smelting of copper, they cannot be designated as having passed out of the stone age; p. 33.

18 Hearne, p. 123.

goods most in demand in the early days of the fur trade.¹⁹ Other basic tools were hammers, drills, and scrapers with which they made bowls, spoons, and all other utensils. Hunting required bows and arrows and fishing was done by means of nets made of thongs cut from raw deer skin. Such a net was unsatisfactory because it was soft and slippery, and would rot unless frequently dried.²⁰

From such tools were made the essentials for protection against the elements. Because of the length and severity of the winters, northern Indians would retain the fur on the caribou hides used for their clothing. The large numbers of such hides necessary in northern latitudes is suggested by Jenness' comment that seven prime caribou hides were necessary to clothe a single Eskimo.²¹ Although such articles of clothing were well suited for northern winter conditions, they were, however, of limited usefulness when the season changed and became wetter, for a hide soaked with rain could not be easily dried. The Indians' appreciation of this latter fact is attested to by their ready utilization of the white man's fabrics, particularly wool and cotton.²²

The Chipewyan acquired their name from the pointed design of the tunics they wore at the time of their first contact with the Cree. The name is derived from the Cree word chipwayanawok, meaning "pointed skin".²³

19 Jenness, pp. 34-5.

20 Hearne, p. 265n.

21 Jenness, p. 75.

22 Ibid., p. 82.

23 Douglas Leechman, "The Pointed Skins", The Beaver (March 1948), p. 16.

The northern Indian's other basic protection against the elements was his dwelling. Those tribes that could secure sufficient numbers of hides made their shelters and their clothing of that material; those that did not, such as the Hare and the Slave, would pass the winter in cabins covered with brush and snow.²⁴ Indians' dwellings provided little more than basic shelter; their function was not to provide comfort:

The Indians had no conception of hygiene; they seldom washed, unless for ceremonial reasons, and their homes were squalid and often filthy. Rotting meat and fish strewn the floors and ground outside; dogs, mice, and parasites of every kind shared the interior with its human inmates. Cooking utensils were invariably uncleanThe ventilation was inadequate; smoke pervaded every corner, despite the hole in the roof, so that many natives incurred serious eye troubles, especially in their advancing years.... Tribes that continually moved their camps had cleaner homes, but were no less unclean in their habits and persons. Privacy in home life was unknown; a fellow tribesman could enter any dwelling without ceremony, even though it were occupied by a single family. The natives often performed most of their tasks, and ate their meals, outside their houses, if the weather permitted; and their dwellings were not so much homes in our conception of that term,²⁵ as indispensable shelters against the elements.

But it was for a much more important reason than mere propriety and comfort that we cannot escape adjudging the northern Indians' existence as being anything but idyllic. The numerical abundance of the animals that provided them with food notwithstanding, the necessity of following them about in migratory wanderings that took the animals at whim over vast tracts made securing sufficient numbers of them so difficult as to make starvation a not infrequent occurrence. The lot of Chipewyan females in times of scarcity has

²⁴ Jenness, pp. 90-1.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

been alluded to; much more melancholy was the lot of entire bands when food gathering conditions became only slightly worse. There was hardly a white man's chronicle of the age that did not remark upon the starvation that was the constant companion of the northern Indians. Sir George Back, writing in as late an era as 1836,²⁶ recounted a two-year period that "had been pregnant with more than ordinary evils to the different tribes inhabiting the country about Slave Lake and the McKenzie River." He noted that

forty of the choicest hunters among the Chipewyans had been destroyed by actual famine; many others had not yet been heard of; and the scattered survivors, from the rigours of the climate, and the difficulty of procuring a single animal, had experienced the severest hardships which even their hardy natures were capable of sustaining.

The question is often asked, if the problems of securing food were such as have been described, why then did the Indians appear to waste so much food? Jenness noted²⁷ that many writers have accused Indians of wastefulness when, following a successful hunt in which many animals were killed, they would take only the tongues and hides of the carcasses, leaving the meat for the birds and foxes. The answer to the paradox of this seeming wastefulness lies not in their improvidence, for the Chipewyan had a reputation among the fur traders for being provident, but in the limited cartage capacity of these tribes. And the conservation of game was unnecessary so long as the Indians lacked firearms, for their problem lay not so much in the abundance of game, but in the actual finding of the animals.

The "hardy natures" Back speaks of would have been essential to

26 Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along the Shores of the Arctic Ocean, in the Years 1833, 1834, and 1835.

27 Op. cit., p. 49.

survival even in times when the supply of food was normal, for, as he put it, suffering was "the Indians' inheritance."²⁸ Their migratory existence, colouring as it did every aspect of their lives, governed its very length. Writes Jenness,

Frequent famines, and the hardships and accidents incidental to a migratory existence devoted to hunting and fishing, must have shortened the average span of life and caused a high rate of mortality among all classes of the population, adults and children alike.²⁹

Infant mortality was particularly high, especially as the limited diets of the northern Indians made the difficult demands of a period of lactation extending over several years an absolute necessity. Prolonged lactation affected female fertility and tended to drastically lessen the numbers of children born. Hearne stated that a woman never had more than five or six children³⁰ and by no means would all of them survive, the rigours of life in northern regions being the prime consideration, although female infanticide practised by mothers to save their daughters from an existence of unremitted hardship was not an inconsiderable factor.

Easily understood when seen in the context of their environment is the northern Indians' practice of abandoning the aged. As Back puts it³¹

For the neglect or abandonment by the more active hunters of the sick and feeble of their tribe, some allowance may be made, on account of the peculiarity

28 Back, p. 225 of the M.G. Hurtig 1971 reprint (Edmonton).

29 Op. cit., p. 51.

30 Op. cit., p. 303.

31 Op. cit., p. 226.

of their circumstances. To follow and keep up with the migratory animals which constitute their food, is essential to the preservation, not only of the hunters themselves, but of the whole encampment. An infirm or diseased savage is not merely useless; he is a positive clog and encumbrance on the motions of the rest. No wonder, then, if occasionally, in the impatience or necessity of the chase [sic], he is left behind to the mercy of chance.

Hearne called old age the greatest calamity that can befall a Chipewyan, "for when he is past labour, he is neglected, and treated with great disrespect, even by his own children."³²

It was a very calculating approach to life and death. The restricted flora of the Mackenzie basin contributed to a general dearth of herbal remedies among the tribes of the region,³³ with the result that sickness was perhaps of greater consequence among them than in other parts of Canada.

Hearne informs us that

when a person is so ill, especially in the Summer, as not to be able to walk, and too heavy to be carried, they say it is better to leave one who is past recovery, than for the whole family to sit down by them and starve to death; well knowing that they cannot be of any service to the afflicted.³⁴

It is perhaps this harsh approach to life that accounts for the Chipewyans' complete lack of ceremony in disposing of the remains of their dead. Hearne notes that the dead are never buried, but left to be fed upon by foxes, wolves, and ravens, for which reason those animals are never eaten, save in the direst circumstances.³⁵ It is anomalous that the dead are so

32 Op. cit., pp. 326-7.

33 Jenness, p. 53, n.2.

34 Op. cit., p. 219.

35 Ibid., p. 323.

treated while the death itself is a much different matter. Writes Hearne, "The death of a near relation affects them so sensibly, that they rend all their clothes from their backs, and go naked, till some persons less afflicted relieve them."³⁶ The death of a near relative was mourned for an entire year.

With the conditions of life being what they were, it is hardly surprising that the hunting tribes of Canada in general, but those of the Mackenzie basin in particular, were barely able to escape extinction. The Beaver population in the days before the European intrusion has been estimated at 1,500; the Chipewyan at 3,500.³⁷ Extremely tenuous as their way of life was in normal circumstances, it became even more so following the warfare with the Cree in the eighteenth century and the introduction among them of the white man's diseases, particularly smallpox. The Beaver and Chipewyan populations are today about 600, and 1,000, respectively.

The Beaver Indians played an important role in the aboriginal history of the Lake Athabasca region. In much earlier times they occupied the lower basin of the Peace River and a tract of land stretching south of Lakes Claire and Athabasca as far as the Methye Portage.³⁸ They derived their name not so much from the importance of the beaver to their existence, but from the fact that their name for the Peace River was tsades, the river of beavers.³⁹ In general, their culture differed but slightly from those of the neighbouring Athapaskan Indians. They too lived a migratory existence and depended almost

36 Loc. cit.

37 Jenness, pp. 384-385.

38 Jenness, p. 382.

39 Ibid., p. 383.

exclusively upon animals for their food and clothing. A minor difference between the Beaver and the Chipewyan Indians involves the Beavers' practice of wrapping their dead in birchbark and placing them in trees or on platforms; their mourning customs were, if anything, much more spectacular than their neighbours'. While this is so, a very good general summary of their culture suffices to make clear the degree to which differences between the Beaver and their neighbours were less profound than the similarities. "The total impression of the culture of the Beaver", writes an American anthropologist who has studied them,

is that of efficient simplicity. The arts are the necessary ones involved in providing food, clothing and shelter. The social organization is the simple one of a flexible family, and a small hunting band, probably chiefly consisting of relatives, led by a chief. The religious feeling is strong, and mostly direct, the individuals receiving their power immediately from some supernatural being unaided by tradition or extended ritual. The conditions of the north perhaps tend neither to develop anything superfluous, or to tolerate non-essentials even if they were introduced from without.⁴⁰

Their common simple political organization was to see the Beaver and Chipewyan share the same fate when their unorganized and primitive bands were confronted with the organized and hitherto insignificant Cree, who were among the very earliest of Indian tribes to be equipped with the white man's weapons.

The Cree are one of twelve tribes in the Algonkian linguistic group. Their home was in a slightly more hospitable territory, and equally as large as the Chipewyan territory. The Cree lived to the south of the Chipewyan and Beaver on an immense crescent-shaped tract of land stretching from the

⁴⁰ Pliny Earle Goddard, The Beaver Indians, pp. 230-1.

Churchill River and terminating well beyond James Bay. Their tribe is generally divided into two groups: the Plains Cree, as their name suggests, lived on the prairies, and were not of as much consequence to the history of the Lake Athabasca region as were those of the second group, the Woodland or Swampy Cree.

In tools, utensils, clothing, and general way of life they did not greatly differ from the Indians of the area we have been studying. Tattooing was more common among the Athapaskans and there was much more dependence upon hare, especially during the winter, than upon the larger animals such as woodland caribou, moose, and bear; fowl too were hunted at various times of year.⁴¹ The basic social units were again the band and the family, but on a somewhat more organized basis. The region they occupied was such that they could afford to treat the destitute members of their groups in more charitable fashion than could the Athapaskans. As Hearne put it,

The Southern Indians [the Cree], with all their bad qualities, are remarkably humane and charitable to the widows and children of departed friends; and as their situation and manner of life enable them to do more acts of charity with less trouble than falls to the lot of a Northern Indian [a Chipewyan], few widows or orphans are ever unprovided for among them.⁴²

Another custom not found among the more northern tribes was the Cree practice of burying their dead in the ground; their mourning, however, was equally dramatic.

Following their contact with Europeans, the way of life of the Chipewyan, Beaver, and Cree Indians underwent the most profound changes. The happier results of that contact included the addition to Indian culture of

⁴¹ Jenness, p. 285.

⁴² Op. cit., pp. 160-161.

European manufactured goods: steel axes and traps, metal cooking pots, and woolen clothing. The unfortunate results are all too easily recorded, the two cardinal ones being the introduction among the Indians of liquor and diseases, particularly the dreaded smallpox.

The most far-reaching and revolutionary white innovation was, however, the white man's firearms. Had their use been confined to facilitating the Indians' hunting its introduction into their culture would have ranked as no more important than the changes brought about by other white amenities; firearms, of course, played a much more profound role in Indian history than that. The Cree were the first of the Indian tribes living about Hudson Bay to receive them, and their organization and aggressive spirit when added to the new weapon allowed them to bring about a revolution in the northern Indians' territorial holdings that has never been reversed.

The Cree expansion is said to have begun around the middle of the seventeenth century and to have reached Lake Winnipeg by 1680.⁴³ The critical stage in the process came shortly thereafter and involved driving the Chipewyan west and north of their former lands. In 1715, the Hudson's Bay Company, itself trying to expand the trade into the interior from the Bay, and fearful lest valuable trading opportunities be lost because of the inter-tribal warfare, sent William Stuart from York Fort towards Great Slave Lake to arrange a truce between the two tribes and bring the Chipewyan down to trade. The initial venture failed because of Cree intransigence, but when superlative trade prospects were reported from the region of Lake Athabasca, the Cree,

43 Fisher, "The Cree of Canada: Some Ecological and Evolutionary Considerations", p. 13.

acting on their own and without white companions, patched up a truce with the Chipewyan and opened up a trade in which they acted as middlemen for the Chipewyan.⁴⁴

The war then took on a pattern that was to be repeated on each side for several decades, a pattern where each truce was to be followed by renewed warfare against another enemy. Following the 1715 truce, one portion of the Woodland Cree carried on its westward expansion, this time warring against the Beaver Indians and their neighbours, whom the former designated as Slaves. The Beaver were driven from the region about the Methye Portage and forced back to the banks of the Peace River. The so-called slaves fled northward from Lake Athabasca along the river and toward the lake that in consequence of the flight came to bear their name.⁴⁵

Following the establishment of Fort Churchill in 1717, the Chipewyan secured arms from the Hudson's Bay Company and themselves waged a war of expansion, driving the coast Eskimo northward, and two other Athapaskan tribes, the Yellowknife and Dogrib, northward. The Chipewyan denied the two latter tribes access to the trading post, and, in turn, acted as middlemen towards them, forcing them to exchange their furs for European trading goods at a fraction of their worth. Despite the 1715 truce with the Cree, the Chipewyan warred intermittently against that element of the Cree that was at war with the Beaver and Slave Indians, until about 1760, when an armistice was concluded.⁴⁶

The Cree ascendancy over the Beaver and Slave had, in the interim,

⁴⁴ Rich, "Indian Traders", p. 9.

⁴⁵ Sir Alexander Mackenzie, p. 238.

⁴⁶ Jenness, p. 385.

continued unchecked. Cree war parties ventured far north down the Mackenzie to its delta, and by 1730 were said to have reached the Rockies,⁴⁷ even penetrating above the difficult waters at the junction of the Findlay and Parsnip Rivers.⁴⁸ They thus anticipated Mackenzie's explorations by several decades. Cree expansion and the warfare that was its unfortunate concomitant continued in the Lake Athabasca region even into the period beyond the establishment there of Peter Pond's fur trade post in 1778. The Cree ascendancy over the neighbouring Indians would doubtless have remained absolute had it not been for the appearance among their number of a devastating smallpox epidemic around 1781. This dire event was followed the next year by the Beaver Indians' coming into possession of firearms.⁴⁹ Renewed warfare on a more equal footing followed, the ultimate result of the Cree weakness and the sudden accretion of Beaver strength being the conclusion of peace between the two tribes at a place on the Beavers' home river that, from the event, was given the name Peace Point. But warfare continued on the pattern previously established. The Beaver warred against the tribes west of them, notably the Sekani, and the Cree against the Slave Indians as far down the Mackenzie River as the mouth of the Liard. War was still being prosecuted by the Cree in 1789.⁵⁰

The intrusion of the European fur trade into northern Canada had, by

47 Fisher, p. 13.

48 Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, pp. 202-3.

49 Mackenzie, p. 253. Hearne estimated that this same epidemic killed nine out of ten Chipewyan, but we cannot know the accuracy of his estimation; see Hearne, p. 200n.

50 Innis, p. 203.

the richness and worth to the Indians of the trade goods it brought in its wake and by the new weapons it made available to the native tribes, provided both the incentive for inter-tribal warfare and the means of prosecuting it. The coming of the representatives of the fur trade to the Indians, reversing as it did the previous pattern, made obsolete the role of Indian middleman and was the eventual reason for the cessation of at least the most virulent Indian warfare. Warfare of another kind, much less ruthlessly pressed to be sure, but also between members of the same race, was fought at Lake Athabasca when the rival fur traders established themselves there and drew their battle lines.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FUR TRADE CONFLICT

From the earliest days of European settlement until at least the middle of the nineteenth century, Canada's rich harvest of furs was the most important factor motivating the movement into the interior. Many furs found their way from Canadian forests to European markets, the coarsest being the utility furs such as bear and wolf. More valuable were ladies' fine furs — mink, marten, lynx, fox and ermine. For such furs there was always a big demand, but the most consistently valued fur was that of the beaver. Its value lay in that it was of prime importance to the hat trade, for beaver hair is microscopically barbed and therefore employed in manufacturing felt that was used to produce high-quality hats. Eric W. Morse¹ noted that Samuel Pepys recorded paying £4 for a beaver hat in a decade when the architect Christopher Wren earned £200 a year. It was a firm and continuing market for all furs, but especially beaver, that made necessary the successive moves into the interior of Canada.

The native population of Canada figured very importantly in the

1 "The Voyageurs' Highway, the Geography and Logistics of the Canadian Fur Trade", a series of three articles appearing in the May, July, and August issues of the Canadian Geographical Journal (1961), pp. 148-161, 3-17, and 64-75; this reference, August, p.65.

development of almost every aspect of the fur trade. It was they who taught the Europeans the secrets of woodcraft necessary for trapping the furs they so avidly sought. Indeed, as Diamond Jenness points out, "all the Indians were skilful trappers centuries before there were any trading posts where the furs could find a market." And when the early fur producing areas were exhausted, it was the Indians and their mixed descendants who, by acting as guides and hunters for the white fur traders, made possible the expansion into the interior. Jenness claims that "We may safely say that large tracts of the Dominion would either be little known today, or entirely unknown, if the country had not been inhabited at the time of its discovery." Warburton Pike, dwelling upon the same theme, put to rest the vanities of so many white "discoveries" when he wrote of his Barren Lands journey: "I naturally ... discovered, as white men say when we are pointed out some geographical feature by an Indian who has been familiar with it since childhood, many lakes and small streams never before visited except by the red man."

It was the combination of the European market for fur and the assistance of the natives that made possible the expansion of the Montreal based fur trade into the Canadian northwest in the eighteenth century. By 1775

2 The Indians of Canada, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin 65, Anthropological Series No. 15, 1963 (sixth edition), p. 59; see also his "Canada's Debt to the Indians", Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. xviii, no. 5 (May 1939), pp. 268-275.

3 Ibid., p.251.

4 The Barren Ground of Northern Canada, London (1892), p. vii quoted in Richard Glover (ed), David Thompson's Narrative, 1784-1812, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1962), p. xxvi.

it had expanded into the Saskatchewan country and the area about
 Isle-à-la-Crosse. Writes Alexander Mackenzie:

in the spring of the year 1778, some of the traders on the Saskatchewan River finding they had a quantity of goods to spare, agreed to put them into a joint stock, and gave the charge and management of them to Mr. Peter Pond, who, in four canoes, was directed to enter the English River [our Churchill River] ...and proceed...if possible, to Athabasca, a country hitherto unknown but from Indian report.

With the assistance of the Indians the New England-born Peter Pond left the waters of Isle-à-la-Crosse (until then the furthest point of white exploration), and crossed the height of land by way of the fourteen-mile Methye Portage. They followed the Clearwater River to its junction with the Athabasca, then descended the latter river to a point about forty miles above Lake Athabasca. A temporary post called Pond's House was speedily erected at, it is thought, the point where the Embarras Channel leaves the main river. From this, the first trading post to be built in the Arctic drainage system, or, indeed, in what is now Alberta, Pond began trading with the Chipewyan and Cree Indians he found about him. It is hardly surprising that they reacted enthusiastically to his having come to them, for in securing the European trading goods in former times they had been forced to make an extremely arduous and hazardous annual journey to Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay, frequently undergoing starvation doing so and expending en route the ammunition that was the chief goal of the expedition.

5 "A General History of the Fur Trade from Canada to the North-West", p.73, in W. Kaye Lamb (ed), The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Toronto, Macmillan of Canada (1970).

6 Cf. ibid., p.131.

"Mr. Pond's reception and success was accordingly beyond his expectation; and he procured twice as many furs as his canoes would carry."⁷ One authority put Pond's trade that season at eight thousand Made-beaver in prime furs,⁸ one-half of which he had to leave behind and pick up next season.

The Athabasca region's reputation for fine furs was established by Pond's first season there; it was to hold it for a very long time, drawing numerous Canadian fur-traders to it. The Athabasca trade and the supply organization needed to develop it grew very rapidly, and had it not been for the high profits to be made there it would not have been economically feasible to supply the region from Montreal, 3,000 miles away. The transporting from Montreal to Athabasca of European goods of every sort — guns, hatchets, animal traps, and textiles from England, beads and trinkets from Italy, brandy from France, rum from the West Indies, and tobacco from Brazil — and of the region's furs to Montreal was done in several stages with enormous labour. The means of getting goods from Montreal to the first destination on the route west, Grand Portage on the west end of Lake Superior (after 1803 it became Fort William according to the international boundary provisions), were the 600-pound canots de maître, manned by a crew of a dozen voyageurs. The trade goods were arranged in ninety-pound packs, sixty of those leaving Montreal in each canot de maître. After transshipment over the height of

7 Ibid., p.73.

8 E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870. Volume 11: 1763-1870; London, The Hudson's Bay Record Society, volume XXII (1959), p. 117; this source will hereafter be cited as Rich, History. "Made-beaver" indicates furs other than beaver as judged against a standard based upon beaver.

land the goods were put on board the smaller and handier "North canoes" that weighed 300 pounds and were manned by six to eight voyageurs. Their capacity was only twenty-five pièces, but their suitability to the demands of the northern waterways and portages outweighed their smaller capacity.

Even though the continent's waterways are such that one can travel from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans, or from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico,⁹ making extensive journeys such as the one from Montreal to the Athabasca region was particularly strenuous. There are sixty lakes large enough to pose navigational problems to canoes, 130 portages where canoes and goods were removed from the water, and 200 décharges where only the goods were removed and carried.¹⁰ Every portage and décharge involved grueling labour. Since a loaded birch-bark canoe might be damaged if it touched land, it was necessary to unload the pièces with the canoe in the water. A voyageur carried 540 pounds over each portage in three loads of 180 pounds each. Morse's description of such an operation is worth examining in full:¹¹

A voyageur quickly slung one of these [Pièces] on his back, with a trumpline over his forehead pulling his head back. Into the hollow thus formed he tossed a second ninety-pound pack which pushed his head forward. Recognizing this as an unhappy condition to be terminated as soon as possible, the voyageurs half-ran, not walked — and many an earlier traveller recorded his own inability, unloaded, to keep up with them.

Not even the shortest portage was inconsequential. Morse noted that a mile-long portage required the voyageur to walk five miles — three times over,

9 Morse, May, p. 150.

10 Chester Martin's introduction to George Simpson's Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department, 1820 and 1821, and Report, London, Hudson's Bay Record Society (1938), p. XVIII: see also Morse, July, p. 17.

11 July, p. 5.

loaded, and twice back; "this would take about two hours altogether to accomplish, to make a total net rate of half a mile an hour." The labour involved in crossing the fourteen mile Methye portage must therefore have been enormous. Its length was made less burdensome however by the presence of a small lake four miles from the north end, but the portage possessed a steep drop down to the Clearwater, the ground being level for eleven miles and then dropping eight hundred feet in the remaining four. "The voyageurs were always happy to get this portage past — especially since, whichever way they were heading, the current now would be with them."¹² With such distances and delays involved it is not difficult to understand why the trip from Montreal to the Athabasca country took up most of the summer. Mackenzie noted that the fastest freight trip from Grand Portage to Fort Chipewyan was 52 days; two months were usually allowed.¹³

The work of getting the furs to market was closely coordinated with the bringing in of the supplies. The distance and climate made delicate timing a necessity for survival. The fur-laden canoes from Athabasca departed in May, and, upon reaching Grand Portage, exchanged the furs for the trade goods carried in the larger canoes from Montreal, and headed back north. These two sets of canoes, each adapted to its own waters, and each having to go only part of the total distance, were the key to circumventing the problems posed in making the 6,000 mile return trip in the five ice-free months available to them. The critical areas for the presence of ice in either the spring

12 Morse, July, pp. 12-13; George Back's 1825 sketch of the portage will be found on p. 36 of the Autumn 1970 number of The Beaver. Mackenzie's own account of "the route by which the progress West and North is made through this continent" will be found on pages 99 to 129 of Lamb's edition.

13 Quoted in Morse, August, p. 69. Cf. also Morse, July, pp. 5-6.

or fall were south of the Methye portage at Peter Pond Lake, and Lac la Loche. The voyageurs, despite the time-saving expedient of swapping loads half-way, were always under the pressure of the imminent onset of winter. "Any delay from sickness, incapacity, broken canoes, or a head wind, involved the danger of starvation."¹⁴

It was this preoccupation with the onset of winter that made it impossible for the voyageurs to hunt or fish en route. All rations had to be carried and, when exhausted, replenished from fixed depots. One of the more significant Indian contributions to the fur trade was pemmican, a highly nutritious mixture of dried meat, fat and berries, which they sold to the trappers. The white men in turn stored this concentrated food at depots along their various travel routes and it was one factor which did so much to make possible the delicately-timed transportation system.

Vital as a steady food supply was, the truly critical factor in the whole system was the voyageur, either pure French-Canadian, or a mixed descendant of the Indians who first taught the whites the use of the canoes that formed the backbone to their fur trade. Durability, cheerfulness, and tractibility were the characteristics of the voyageur; all three were necessary in almost equal proportions to bring him and his fellows through the seemingly endless number of days that began around the third hour of each new day, the muscle-cracking labour of paddling and portaging, and the incessant insect plague. Amazing as his accomplishments are, they are made to appear even more so in light of the fact that he engaged in these labours not for pecuniary advancement, but out of pure love of freedom and adventure.¹⁵

¹⁴ E.E. Rich, "Athabasca, 1938", The Beaver (December 1938), p. 13.

¹⁵ Morse, August, p. 69.

It was not so for his employers of course, for the fur trade in the Athabasca region was highly profitable, as it had to be to maintain such an elaborate supply system, and hence attracted a great many who sought to make their fortunes out of it. Another attractive aspect of the fur trade in the Canadian northwest in general manifested itself at a slightly later date when the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, ending the American Revolutionary War. Even though British traders based in Canada were not legally debarred from the region below the Great Lakes for many years, it was realized that change would come eventually, and that other sources of furs would have to be gotten; hence the increased numbers of traders who went into the Canadian northwest.¹⁶

But only the very largest concerns could bear the expense and circumvent the problems of getting goods into, and furs out of, the Athabasca region at a minimum of hazard to the people involved. Individual traders and small partnerships could not hope to prosper, or even continue trading, unless bigger unions were entered into. The first definite step toward completion of a large-scale union came the year Pond emerged from the Athabasca region, when nine traders agreed to pool their operations for a one-year period. The agreement was renewed in the following year, and in the winter of 1783-1784, a five-year agreement was concluded and the name "North West Company" officially designated as the appellation of the combined concern.¹⁷ Aggressiveness was the predominant characteristic of that concern's partners, as each had a personal stake in its success. Although not the only one, the North West Company was the most famous and long-lived of the fur trade amalgamations. Gregory, McLeod and Company of Montreal was another large

¹⁶ Lamb, pp. 4-5.

¹⁷ Rich, History, p. 117.

concern; in its class too was the New North West Company, formed in 1798, whose popular name, derived from the markings put on its trade bales, was the XY Company.

The trend toward larger concerns only lessened but did not eliminate the rivalries in the Athabasca-district fur trade. The rivalries were most apparent between the larger concerns. John Ross, an Athabasca wintering partner of Gregory, McLeod and Company, was murdered in the spring of 1787 under conditions which implicated Peter Pond of the North West Company. When the news reached Grand Portage, the leaders of the two companies, determined to put an end to the possibility of such events recurring, brought about a merger. Philip Turnor of the Hudson's Bay Company claimed that the decision was made to prevent too great an inquiry being made into the affair; Pond was later acquitted.¹⁸

A young Scotsman named Alexander Mackenzie, who in 1779 had become a clerk in the firm that later became Gregory, McLeod and Company, became a partner in the North West Company upon the union of 1787, and was immediately sent into Athabasca to relieve Pond, and, apparently, to wind up the Company's operations there.¹⁹ The murder of John Ross effectively put an end to Pond's career in the fur trade, but his geographical discoveries and his speculative projections of them were to be a significant factor both in the establishment of Fort Chipewyan and in the great discoveries Mackenzie embarked upon from that establishment.

18 H.A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, revised edition (1956), p. 200n.

19 Rich, History, p. 135.

Fur trading had of course been Pond's primary occupation while in the Athabasca country, but he was nevertheless able to devote a great deal of energy to exploration and map-making. The object of his research was the elusive North West Passage, the fabled route to the Pacific Ocean and the Orient. His researches had progressed to the stage where he was able on March 1, 1785, to present to the American Continental Congress then meeting in New York his map of the northwest that showed a river flowing northward from Lake Athabasca to the sea, the sum impression being that of a discovery of the passage to the North West Sea. A third version of the map appeared in July, 1787, and again described the northward flowing river, as well as a major outlet for Great Slave Lake flowing due west. The latter was probably the result of Captain Cook's having mistaken an inlet for the estuary of a large river, thus misleading Pond. (Cook's account of his visit to the Pacific Coast was published in 1784.) Pond, says Lamb, "now concluded that the Rocky Mountains must come to an end about Latitude $62^{\circ} 30'$ north, and that Cook's River flowed westward to the Pacific north of them."²⁰ Another error was of more importance. The western end of Lake Athabasca was placed three-quarters of the distance across the continent from Hudson Bay, whereas it should be less than halfway; Pond showed it as 132° West longitude as opposed to 112° , a discrepancy of seven hundred miles.²¹

Pond's enthusiasm over the work accomplished to date and the tantalizing nature of his conjectures were communicated to Mackenzie when the latter

20 Op. cit., pp. 12-13.

21 Lawrence J. Burpee, The Search for the Western Sea, The Story of the Exploration of North-Western America, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited (1935), 2 volumes; this reference, volume I, pp. 167-8; see also Lamb, pp. 9-13, and facsimiles of the maps being discussed therein.

arrived to replace him. The transfer of enthusiasm was such that Mackenzie, far from closing down operations in that quarter, decided to sponsor an expansion of the Company's activities to Lake Athabasca, both to further the trade, and to establish a base for further explorations.²²

The trade in the region had gone well for two years following Pond's epoch-making expansion into it in 1778, but had then suffered with the arrival of a smallpox epidemic of major proportions. It was the same epidemic that Hearne had claimed was responsible for the death of nine out of ten Chipewyan, and which had figured so prominently in the checking of the Cree advance into Beaver territory in the immediate area of the lake and its western delta.²³ The peace between the two tribes that was secured in 1782 came at the same time as the northern fur trade began to improve. The improvement was such that Pond in 1786 sent Cuthbert Grant to establish a post on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. It was therefore both the improvement in the trade and the excitingly real prospect of great new geographical advances that led Mackenzie to reverse the plan of closing down the Old Establishment and to embrace instead a policy of expansion to Lake Athabasca and beyond.

Mackenzie's employers were not loath to accommodate him in both his proposals. The North West Company was ever on the lookout for opportunities to expand its operations, and hoped to secure monopoly rights in the Athabasca region, just as its rival English company had monopoly rights in lands drained by waters flowing into Hudson Bay. "To expand", Lamb wrote of the North West Company, "it would be necessary to explore, and the Company hoped that

22 Rich, History, p. 135, notes that the posts then in operation in the region were the Old Establishment (Pond's House), and Forts Resolution and Providence on Great Slave Lake.

23 See Chapter Two.

exploration, which could be linked with an extension of British sovereignty, might win it support and concessions from the British Government."²⁴ A more practical and immediate dream of the Company was to find an easy route of access to the Pacific to enable it to engage in trade with China.

It was with all these considerations in mind that in 1788 Alexander Mackenzie sent his cousin Roderick to build a post on Lake Athabasca. Roderick chose a site on the lake's south shore some eight miles east of the Athabasca River's point of entry, the location becoming known as Old Fort Point when, by 1804, the original Fort Chipewyan had been moved to its present location on a promontory on the north shore of the lake's western end. Fort Chipewyan is Alberta's oldest continuously settled community;²⁵ it immediately became of very great importance in the industry that gave birth to it.

Its central location and nearness to the routes leading out of the region caused it to be made into a depot for the fur trade conducted along the Peace, Slave, and Mackenzie Rivers. The autumn brigades brought their goods to Fort Chipewyan for redistribution to all the other posts, and furs from these found their way to Fort Chipewyan each spring prior to being taken out of the region. The distances involved and the nature of the climate were such that had it not been for the presence of this depot on Lake Athabasca it would have been impossible to develop in later years a string of posts along the Mackenzie River, for furs from that region got to Montreal in two stages, after having been a year at Fort Chipewyan.

The North West Company's boldness in expanding to the lake was soon to be lavishly rewarded, for just as Pond's Old Establishment had diverted the

24 Op. cit., p. 7.

25 J.W. Chalmers, "Social Stratification of the Fur Trade", Alberta Historical Review, vol. 17, no. 1 (Winter 1969), p. 10.

trade of the Beaver and Cree Indians from Hudson Bay, so too did the establishment of a post on the lake itself divert the trade of the Chipewyan Indians living to the north from reaching the English. A post of such importance had of necessity to be a more imposing establishment than would do elsewhere. Its lavishness elicited Philip Turnor's admiration three years later: "This [is] the compleatest inland house I have seen in the country... and I am informed they have a sufficient quantity of trading goods in this country for at least two years to come."²⁶ The establishment thus became known as the "Emporium of the North", and the library built up there by Roderick Mackenzie caused it to be given a second appellation, "Little Athens".

Fort Chipewyan was as admirably placed for administering the Athabasca region's fur trade as it was for geographical exploration. Along with Lakes Superior and Winnipeg, Lake Athabasca was a transportation hub for canoe-borne travel. From it one could make water connections in every direction — to the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, to Hudson Bay, and to the Churchill River. Only the last was known to Mackenzie in 1789; the other connections were as yet only conjectures awaiting verification. It was with a view to discovering a route to the Pacific capable of being employed by fur traders that he left Fort Chipewyan on June 3, 1789, on his way north to the Arctic Ocean, and returned September 12. The fact that the ocean he found was not the Pacific led him to name the great river that would later bear his name the River of Disappointment, but the trip did prove that there was no navigable passage from the Arctic to the Pacific through the body of the continent. He had disproved Pond's first conjecture, and with a view to determining the accuracy of the second, set out

26 J.B. Tyrrell (ed), Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1934); this entry is June 29, 1791, and is quoted in Innis, p. 231n.

westward from Fort Chipewyan along the Peace River on October 10, 1792, and reached the Pacific Ocean on July 22, 1793, thus becoming the first man to effect the overland crossing of the continent north of Mexico. He showed also that it was not possible for fur trade freight canoes to cross the mountains.²⁷

It was the geographical work of Pond and Mackenzie that served to introduce the Hudson's Bay Company into the Athabasca country for the first time since William Stuart visited it from the north in 1715 while on a mission to secure peace between warring Chipewyan and Cree tribes and bring them down to Hudson Bay to trade — thus becoming the first white man to travel in the Mackenzie watershed and see Great Slave Lake and Slave River — and since Samuel Hearne's journey to the mouth of the Coppermine (1770 - 1772) brought him to the shores of Lake Athabasca. The next Hudson's Bay Company incursion into the area came about as a result of the British Government's interest in the map produced by Pond in 1785. Because it indicated that only a little additional effort would be required to connect Pond's discoveries with Cook's, the government, in an attempt to have the veracity of Pond's observations on the position of Lake Athabasca incontrovertibly established, secured the cooperation of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in 1790 a team of the Company's surveyors led by Philip Turnor and including in its number Malchom Ross and Peter Fidler went into the Athabasca Country. As it was the party's intention to conduct exploratory work only — work whose results would be of great interest to the North West Company — and not to trade, it got along splendidly with the Company's employees in the area. In an expedition that took two years to complete, Turnor surveyed the Athabasca River below the mouth of the Clearwater, Athabasca Lake, Slave River, and

27 Morse, August, p. 71.

some of the south shore of Great Slave Lake — the last two to determine if²⁸
 there was any ready access to Chesterfield Inlet. Turnor and company made
 important clarifications of Pond's work, and in fact for the first time
 delineated Lake Athabasca in its correct form. Both Turnor's outline and²⁹
 positions were said to be remarkably accurate.

While in the Athabasca region Turnor and his men could not help but
 note the extent of the fur trade carried on there. They became aware too of
 the sometimes cruel manner in which some of the North West Company employees
 treated the Indians with whom they traded. These impressions were fortified
 by Fidler's experiences of a winter spent among the Chipewyan of Great Slave
 Lake, where he learned of their desire for the presence among them of Hudson's
 Bay Company traders to enable them to take a more independent stance towards³⁰
 the North West Company. The fur-bearing wealth of the region and the firm
 conviction that the English would be welcome there led Turnor to urge the
 establishment of an Athabasca post, but the Company's reaction was to deny
 its servants access to Athabasca.

The Hudson's Bay Company had of course not been unaware of the
 Canadian incursions. The value of the furs marketed through the St. Lawrence³¹
 had of late become many times that channelled through the Bay, and each step
 made by the English to nullify the Canadian threat was outflanked. The
 initial Canadian presence in the southern reaches of the Hudson Bay drainage
 system succeeded in cutting off furs from the major English establishment at

28 Rich, History, pp.140-1.

29 Burpee, I, pp.169-170.

30 Rich, History, p.141.

31 The figures are given in Lamb, p.7.

York Factory. The English moved inland and established Cumberland House in modern Saskatchewan, some 150 miles up the Saskatchewan River from Lake Winnipeg, under Samuel Hearne in 1774, evoking the response among the Canadian traders of stronger and more durable partnerships among themselves,³² and steady expansion westward. The next step saw the Canadians trading in the Saskatchewan and Churchill River areas, hindering furs from reaching both Cumberland House and Fort Churchill. Finally, the traders from Montreal denied the English access to two of their few remaining markets when Pond's Old Establishment on the Athabasca River and Roderick Mackenzie's Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca diverted the trade of the Indians who in former times made the incredibly arduous journey over the barren lands to trade at Churchill.

The belated and sluggish nature of the Hudson's Bay Company's response to the swift-moving Canadian threat is in part accounted for by the nature of its organization. The Hudson's Bay Company's employees were wage earners who had no desire to aggressively expand their company's operations as did the partners of the North West Company and other Canadian firms, who each had a direct link with their company's fortunes. And the Hudson's Bay Company was not always able to exercise the control over its employees that it fancied lay in its power. Personal considerations and animosities influenced Hearne when in 1786 he disregarded instructions from London and sent Robert Longmoor³³ not to Athabasca as ordered, but to the Saskatchewan country. A strong English presence in the region a year before Mackenzie's arrival at Lake

32 Rich History, p.66.

33 Ibid., p.121.

Athabasca might well have altered both immediate and future developments there.

But the Company's very survival depended upon its carrying the struggle into the Athabasca country, they "must oppose the Nor'westers in their own strongholds, must either get a footing in Athabasca, or renounce control of the Bay."³⁴ But any projected move into Athabasca involved the consideration that to a trader operating out of York Factory or Fort Churchill the familiar route used by the Canadian voyageurs added one thousand miles to the trip;³⁵ the Canadians were not unhappy with their route for, difficult as it was, it possessed the inestimable advantage of allowing them to get trade goods to the Indians before the Indians got their furs to the Bay.³⁶ It is perhaps indicative of the Hudson's Bay Company's approach to the coming conflict that the first move in its undertaking to win the race against the Canadians to outfit the Indians for the year's trapping was to attempt to find an eastern approach to Lake Athabasca that would allow it to exploit its location on the Bay and thus begin the struggle with its rivals from a position of advantage. Sea-borne explorations with a view to finding a means of communication between Fort Churchill and Lake Athabasca were begun under Captain Charles Duncan in 1790 at the inspiration of Pond's explorations north of Lake Athabasca, but by 1792 the mission was seen to have failed, and the task of finding easy access to Lake Athabasca from the east was given to "more normal employees"³⁷ using methods more conventional to the fur trade.

The employee in question was a surveying student of Turnor's,

34 Rich, "Athabasca, 1938", p.12.

35 Glover, pp.xxv-xxvi.

36 Martin, p.xviii.

37 Rich, History, pp.130-1, 140-1, and 145.

David Thompson. He began the assignment in quite half-hearted fashion in 1793, and due to four delays the attempt to reach Lake Athabasca by way of the Nelson and Burntwood Rivers, and Reindeer and Wollaston Lakes did not get underway until 1796. In the company of two Chipewyan he began to survey northward through Reindeer and Wollaston Lakes, and down the Fond du Lac River to the east end of Lake Athabasca.³⁸ The work was difficult and hazardous, and Thompson barely escaped death by drowning and exposure. His work, however, proved the inadvisability of trying to bypass the traditional route. Tantalizing as the nearness of Churchill to Lake Athabasca was, making use of the waterways between the two proved too difficult and dangerous, and the country too sparsely peopled. Climatic difficulties prevented an easy solution too, for Reindeer and Wollaston Lakes do not break up until about June 20, more than a month after the brigades it was conjectured would use this route would have left Fort Chipewyan.³⁹ Finally, the waterways involved were too shallow in late summer to permit the passage of the heavily laden brigades.

The entrance of the Hudson's Bay Company into the fur trade of the Athabasca country had therefore to be made not by way of Fort Churchill and the Burntwood Carrying Place, but through York Factory, Cumberland House, Isle-à-la-Crosse, and the Methye Portage. The Company's route and methods did not of course exactly copy the Canadians'. Hudson's Bay Company York boats travelled up the Hayes and Echimamish Rivers (the Nelson not being easily navigable), and crossed the Painted Stone Portage to reach Lake Winnipeg's Norway House, the starting point of a labour-saving innovation

38 For his own account of this work see pp.108-120 of Glover's edition of his Narrative.

39 Morse, May, p.156.

developed later that was identical to the one employed by the North West Company in crossing Grand Portage. The boats coming from the northern posts would meet boats originating at Norway House and would exchange goods and furs at the Methye Portage, the rendezvous point being the lake four miles from its north end. This system saved having to portage the boats themselves. The system took time to develop and was not in use when the
⁴⁰
 Company first ventured into the Athabasca country.

The Hudson's Bay Company's tardiness allowed the North West Company and XY Company to develop a very important trade in Athabasca. Alexander Henry the Younger described it as the North West Company's treasure house:

It is this vast extent of country from which the N.W.Co. may be said to draw their treasures. It is true, profits arise from the trade in other parts, eastward; but nothing in comparison to what we obtain from the Athabasca country.⁴¹

Its importance is attested to by the proportion of the North West Company's total employees kept in the Athabasca district. In 1801 the Company had 981 men in the entire Northwest country, and 257 of them were in the
⁴²
 Athabasca district.

The Athabasca country was left in the possession of the Canadian traders until 1802, when Peter Fidler, chosen no doubt because of the experience of the district he had gained while there in 1790-1792, led a pitifully small force of seventeen traders to Lake Athabasca and built a post, Nottingham House, on English Island, a mile from the site to which

⁴⁰ Morse, July, pp. 14-16, and August, p.69; the places involved and details of the York Factory-Norway House route will be found in Burpee, I, p.xxxiv.

⁴¹ Quoted in Innis, p.229.

⁴² Ibid., p.238.

Fort Chipewyan was to be moved by 1804. The smallness of the English presence was hardly sufficient to excite alarm among the Canadians, and was, indeed, a source of mockery. It is unfortunate that it did not remain merely that, for the four trading seasons that Fidler, his family, and his followers spent at Nottingham House were marked by hardship, hazard, and extreme disappointment. Lost between the two Canadian giants and receiving completely inadequate support from a Company having to compete simultaneously in the Athabasca and Saskatchewan regions, the team led by Fidler had no alternative but to accept ultimate defeat at the end of 1806.

The campaign began auspiciously. The Indians were glad to see the English among them once again, for the violence and cajolery practised by the Canadian traders upon them were loathsome to them. The cruelty of some of the North West Company employees was such that a half-dozen of them were⁴³ killed by the Indians in the period under consideration. During the summer of 1804 the Chipewyan had risen against their oppressors and at the eastern end of Lake Athabasca — at Fond du Lac — had killed the two North West Company employees stationed there and burned the establishment. About the same time in the general vicinity of Fort Chipewyan they vented their wrath on that company's men by killing four of them when they found them travelling outside the fort.

Fidler's presence meant that the Indians had alternative trading partners, but the strength and disposition of the two other companies was

⁴³ J.G. MacGregor, Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822, Toronto and Montreal, McClelland and Stewart Limited (1966), p. 157.

such that the bullying, a liberal flow of liquor, and skilfully practised intimidation kept the bulk of the Indians from the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment and resulted in little trading for them. Adequate provisions also proved very difficult to obtain. Supplies of fish were obtained without extreme difficulty from the lake itself, but an employee, Thomas Swain, sent in 1802 to found Mansfield House a considerable distance up the Peace River in order to secure pemmican for Nottingham House, was kept by the North-westerners from getting any and had to return. The North West obstruction manifested itself even at the Lake, and few provisions from the Indians were forthcoming. By the time of his departure in the spring of 1803⁴⁴ Fidler had acquired only 253 beaver.

This pattern was repeated in the 1803-1804 trading season, but the one beyond that was to be much different because of the amalgamation of the two Canadian companies. Fidler's journal reveals clearly that he had no illusions as to the significance of the move. On Monday, May 6, 1805, he wrote:

...at 8 am 2 Canadians from Peace River came here in a canoe each in one belonging to each company-with Circular Letters to all the Proprietors of Both Companies that a junction of the two Companies had taken place last October in Montreal.... Now that both Companies have joined we shall stand a much worse chance than before to get any Skins-as they have threatened that should such an event take place, as has now happened, they would soon [force?] us all out of this Quarter, & as we are so very few we have little chance[.]

The news was accompanied with a fair amount of jubilation and forgiveness of past transgressions among the Canadians:

44 Rich, History, p.220.

when the news came of the juncture of the 2 Canadian Companies, they both hoisted their Flaggs & fired many shots- and both sides appear to be very good friends, altho' before, they were able to cut one anothers throats, and did one another every private mischief they was able.... ⁴⁵

Fidler's perception of the seemingly insincere nature of the Canadians' overnight reconciliation is borne out by his biographer who indicated that relations between the Hudson's Bay Company and the XY Company were good enough to allow for cooperation against the Northwesters on Lake Athabasca on several occasions. ⁴⁶ But the union superseded such sentiments for, as Innis put it, "After amalgamation with the XY Company, fresh and violent efforts were made by the Northwest Company to check the Hudson's Bay Company." ⁴⁷ Conditions for doing so were ripe, for the amalgamation ended most of the extravagant generosity afforded the Indians that was the inevitable concomitant of any fur trade competition, and returns for the North West Company increased rapidly, "doubling and trebling." ⁴⁸ It is not surprising that the fortunes of Fidler and his men declined proportionately to the North West Company's successes. The bullying and obstructionist activities were such that Fidler and his people were forced to capitulate to their oppressors in the winter of 1805-1806. In return for agreeing to refrain from trading that season and to withdraw Hudson's Bay Company

⁴⁵ B.39/a/4.

⁴⁶ MacGregor, p.155.

⁴⁷ Op.cit. p.279.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.202.

employees from the lake for the following two years, Fidler and his people were promised provisions for the winter, and, in the spring, three hundred large beaver and two hundred Made-beaver and a canoe with which to carry them out, together with provisions for the trip. Until their departure the residents of Nottingham House were given the use of a small canoe for fishing purposes. The pettiness of the Northwesters' stance toward Fidler and company is revealed by their failure to refrain from perpetrating childish pranks upon the hapless traders even after the conclusion of the agreement.⁴⁹ They struck their final blow when, upon Fidler's departure from the lake, he called for the beaver he had been promised and the Northwesters refused to deliver them to him.

It was in that fashion that the Hudson's Bay Company servants left Nottingham House on June 9, 1806. The Company's first attempt to trade in the vital Athabasca country had ended in failure. A year later Fidler went on to conduct the company's final survey of the eastern approaches to Lake Athabasca, his work putting the finishing touches upon whatever hopes still lingered of making use of those waterways for trade purposes. In the course of his survey he travelled north through Saskatchewan's Reindeer Lake to the larger body of water which he named Wollaston and then followed the stream making its way towards Lake Athabasca until near the North West Company's Fond du Lac outpost he connected his survey with the one he and Turnor had made in 1791.

The Hudson's Bay Company's general policy came to be one of retrenchment in the face of both wartime demands and Canadian competition,

⁴⁹ MacGregor, pp.160-1.

the result being that further advances toward the Lake Athabasca country had to wait upon developments in the farthest east portion of the land controlled by the Company.

The second challenge to the North West Company's monopoly in Athabasca can be said to have begun when an employee of that Company who was intimately familiar with its trade in the Athabasca department decided to change loyalties. Colin Robertson, motivated in equal measures by disgust with North West Company methods and disappointment in his prospects for advancement within their organization, decided to leave them in 1809 and seek employment in the Hudson's Bay Company, to which concern he hoped to contribute valuable advice on renewing the struggle.⁵⁰

He journeyed to England and in the beginning of 1810 presented to the Company's controlling body his plans for renewing the competition in Athabasca. Its essence involved the employment in Montreal of French Canadian voyageurs in place of the Orkneymen who, however sturdy and loyal, "were only competent for the Bay-side posts and were thinking about retirement by the time they had learned to handle a canoe...."⁵¹ Robertson's plan envisioned the employment of these voyageurs commanded by men who understood both them and their language, who would carry the trade into Lake Athabasca, all the while being heavily supported with guides, fishermen, food and transport, from the Company's existing posts.

50 E.E.Rich (ed), Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822, Hudson's Bay Record Society (1939), p.xxiv, hereafter cited as Rich, Robertson.

51 Ibid., p.xxvii.

The Company's finances were, however, in a perilous state, and a policy of retrenchment took precedence over Robertson's aggressive and fairly expensive proposals, but within four years it had become plain that the Company could not pursue a policy of consolidation within its own territories while simultaneously trying to expand the trade without going into opposition with the Canadians. Those revelations and Lord Selkirk's colonizing work on the Red River were responsible for the second and ultimately successful Hudson's Bay Company incursion into Lake Athabasca.

The first steps in founding the colony at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers were taken early in 1811, and the North West Company from the outset regarded it with suspicion. It feared either of two possibilities: that the colony might be a means of giving the English Company reserves of men, control of food supplies, and of the North West Company's routes through the area, or that it might be a means of enabling Selkirk to engage directly in the fur trade. The Northwesters "could not rid their minds of the certainty that it was really a concealed attack on their trade, and that the branch of trade at which the colony was aimed was⁵² the Athabaska trade." Although such was not the Company's overt intent, Robertson acted as though it were — and convinced others of it — when Company officials, responding to the awareness that docile acceptance of the North West presence in the fur trade was no longer mandatory, approached him, endorsed his plans, and sent him to Montreal to put them in motion.

52 Ibid., pp.xlvi and xlviii; cf. Innis, p.235. "[The] Availability of large quantities of pemmican was essential to the trade of Athabasca just as corn and grease were essential to the trade to Grand Portage."

He arrived in September, 1814, and immediately made the close connection between the colony and the fur trade unmistakably plain. "The North West Company had always been convinced that the colony masked an attempt on Athabaska: now Robertson used it for precisely that purpose."⁵³ Robertson, in order to keep his plan for advancing into Athabasca secret until it was too late for the North West Company to warn its wintering partners, conducted all his business under the name of the colony. The men and equipment for sixteen canoes were procured over the course of the autumn and winter and left for the interior on May 17, 1815.⁵⁴ But the North-westerners' intransigence toward the founding of the colony had resulted in its disruption by the time the brigade reached it. Since its existence as a provisions depot was vital to his work in Athabasca, Robertson consented to give command of the brigade and the Company's first season in Athabasca to John Clarke while agreeing to relinquish his plans to return to England, and help instead to organize the reestablishment of the settlement.

In the fall of 1815, Clarke established several posts in the Athabasca district: Fort Wedderburn on Coal (now Potatoe) Island on Lake Athabasca one-and-a-half miles from Fort Chipewyan, at Hay River, and on Great Slave Lake. The beginnings seemed promising enough, but misfortune and over-extention of their resources led to tragedy. In an effort to ease the problem of provisioning his men Clarke decided to disperse them along the Peace River.

At this juncture the full force of the North West Company's tactics struck him. Open bloodshed ill suited that company's policy; starvation was

⁵³ Rich, Robertson, p. lvii.

⁵⁴ For the principal personnel involved see ibid., p. lviii.

a better weapon. The machinery needed to bring this about was all prepared. It lay waiting the signal to touch it off. John McGillivray of the North West Company at Dunvegan, who happened to be at Chipewyan at the time, gave the word. In five half-loaded canoes, Clarke led his men from Fort Wedderburn up the Peace River into the far-famed country of plenty. A few days prior to this McGillivray had sent out his instructions bidding the Indians to keep ahead of the Hudson's Bay Company's men and to drive all game back from the river, and, on no account, to have anything to do with them or to feed them. The English party was forced by starvation to stop at Loon River. Meanwhile, Clarke had gone ahead as far as Fort Vermilion. Sixteen men turned back from Loon River towards Lake Athabasca, but the river froze and they had to abandon their canoes and make their way on foot. One by one, individuals fell out on the way. Three only reached Fort Wedderburn. The rest perished from starvation. In due course the Northwesters finally captured Clarke and some of the other men who had ascended the river.

To this tragedy was added the bitterness of having to depend upon the North West Company's reserves of food for survival that winter. Aulay McAulay at Great Slave Lake was forced to surrender his trade goods to the North West Company personnel in return for provisions. The survivors of the Peace River trek got provisions from the residents of Fort Chipewyan in return for promising not to serve the Hudson's Bay Company in that region for three years. Clarke, rather than capitulate to this demand, lived for a time on rose hips before submitting.⁵⁵ The nature and completeness of the

55 On this first season see Campbell, pp.241-3; Martin, pp.xxxv-xxxvi; and Rich, Robertson, pp. lxx-lxxi.

disaster did not daunt Clarke but, rather, strengthened him in his resolve to re-enter the fray against the "White Savages" who had attempted to starve him into submission.⁵⁶ It is fortunate for the Company that Clarke was of such a disposition, for the conflict was vital to both companies. The company that came to control Lake Athabasca would control the whole of the northern fur trade.⁵⁷

The second trading season was much more violent and eventful, but did not result in any loss of life. The Northwester A.N. McLeod had been made Justice of the Peace for the Indian territories and used those powers and a system of bullying and terrorism to disrupt the English trade in Athabasca. Those in charge of the summer establishment at Fort Wedderburn were arrested, an Indian who attempted to trade there seized, and a block house erected to dominate the establishment. The Hudson's Bay Company personnel there could hardly compete against the 150 men under McLeod's command.⁵⁸ More violence followed. Clarke was arrested in January, 1817, Fort Wedderburn seized, and François Decoigne's post at Lesser Slave Lake in the Peace River district, taken. The only consolation afforded the luckless English in the whole sorry affair was the trust the Indians placed in them — even though the post in the Peace River area had been burned,

56 Rich, Robertson, p. lxxi.

57 See Rich, "Athabasca, 1938", p.13.

58 Rich, History, p.341.

the Indians kept the results of their hunts from the Northwesters.⁵⁹

Illustrating this sentiment is the comment written by François Decoigne on September 28, 1817:

[We] met a Band of the Chipiwan Indians who were glad to see us return [again?] to their Protection in order to deliver them from that State of Slavery which they labour under by the Tyranny of the North West Company-but notwithstanding their being Pleased to see us they still dreaded the consequences of joining us on account of our being so few in number. But [informed?] us that if we would come in next year sufficiently strong enough to protect them from the ravages of the North West Company they would make no hesitation whatever in joining us — we gave them every encouragement to abandon their [North West?] Trading but, yet, they were in favor of the North West Company on account of their Superior force....⁶⁰

The trade, however, went very badly, even when Robertson commanded the department during the 1818-1819 season. On September 17, 1818, he and his brigade arrived, three weeks before the arrival of the North West brigade.⁶¹ This head start allowed him to rectify to a certain extent a frequent complaint of the Indians' about their having to deal with the North West Company because of the Hudson's Bay Company's tardiness.⁶²

59 Ibid., p. 342.

60 B. 39/a/13.

61 Rich, History, p. 348.

62 Cf. another of Decoigne's comments on this (14 October, 1817, B. 39/a/13). When McAulay and McVicar arrived at Fort Chipewyan "they were surrounded by Indians who appeared highly Pleased to see us return to their lands and [who] told them that they were sorry that we did not arrive a little sooner as then they had taken up all their Debts from the North West Company after waiting our arrival till a few days ago when they gave up all hopes of our coming in this year. this is truly disturbing that we should always be so unfortunate in our Proceedings as to disapoint these Indians who are so well inclined towards us."

Clarke experienced similar successes in Peace River. The Indians were gratified to learn that the English were beginning to give the Northwesters as good as they got. The North West Company's reaction was bitter, and the pattern of arrests, imprisonment, and general intimidation begun previously now manifested itself again. In a scuffle with Samuel Black and Simon McGillivray Jr. at Fort Wedderburn on Sunday, October 11, Robertson was
63
captured and taken prisoner. He was released next spring, and although a modest amount of trading was done that year, a much more important factor was the Indians' growing disenchantment with the "pretended authority" of the North West Company in the face of the English persistence in general, and Clarke's bravado on Peace River where he re-took trade goods of theirs
64
impounded previously by the North West Company.

Much more important was the fact that the strain of meeting the envigorated Hudson's Bay competition in the fur trade and on the Red River, when combined with the expenses involved in the litigation with Selkirk over the latter and the North West Company's lack of any reserve capital, all resulted in a mortal weakening of the Company. A much more fundamental weakness had been gnawing at the Canadian company's fortunes throughout the period of the 1815-1821 conflict. An aroused Hudson's Bay Company possessed as it was with the ability to put trade goods into the centre of the continent at a fraction of the cost encountered by the North West Company

63 See Rich, Robertson, p.76 for the fur trader's own account of the event, and Rich's analysis of the account, Rich, History, pp. 349-350.

64 Rich, History, pp.350-1.

with its overland routes could hardly be expected to do other than best a concern forced by geography to ship goods across the continent at enormous expense.⁶⁵ The outcome began to be apparent as early as 1819. Robertson's dogged persistence in leading the Hudson's Bay Company back to Athabasca for the 1819-1820 season heartened the Indians immensely, especially as he had been removed that spring as a prisoner of the Canadians'. That winter proved the permanence of the Hudson's Bay Company's Athabasca establishments,⁶⁶ and even through bitter harassing continued into George Simpson's sojourn there, 1820-1821, the outcome was not long in coming. The balance had so swung in favour of the Hudson's Bay Company that Simpson was able to record on 19 May, 1821:⁶⁷

The returns of Peace River surpass any former year amounting to twenty nine Packs of 80 lbs each nearly all prime Beaver... the returns of our Opponents I understand are nearly one-third less....

The struggle ended in ultimate victory for the Hudson's Bay Company when on March 26, 1821 it absorbed its rival. A new era in Fort Chipewyan's history had begun.

- 65 See Morse, p.155, Innis p.289, and W.S. Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1934), pp. 26-27.
- 66 Rich, Robertson, p. xcvi.
- 67 Simpson's Journal and Report, p.339. William Brown of the same company recorded in his report that the Northwesters took out only ten packs of fur in the 1819-1820 period, and that he guessed they would get out only twenty packs in 1820-1821; see J.M. Parker's unpublished master's thesis, The Fur Trade of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska, 1778-1835, University of Alberta (1967), p. 183.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Monopoly Era: Life in Fort Chipewyan, 1821 - 1871

The cessation of the fur trade conflict in 1821 ushered in five decades of peaceful monopoly rule throughout all the lands of British North America that were under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company. Lawlessness, imprisonments, policies of starvation, and violent deaths at the hands of rival fur traders all ended with the amalgamation. A period of peace of hitherto unknown duration began, enabling the people throughout all the Canadian northwest to devote their attentions to mastering the fur trade and the difficult problems of making a living off an environment reluctant to be exploited. The degree to which the Hudson's Bay Company succeeded in doing so is illustrated by the comment that "Seldom has there existed an instance in which monopoly was exercised over a wide area through such a long period of history in a single industry as in the Northern department from 1821 to 1869."¹ It is this period of calm that will best allow us to study various aspects of life at Fort Chipewyan, to learn something of what it was like to live there in the last century.

The fur traders and the natives at Fort Chipewyan shared in the return to peace and gladly took advantage of the cessation of hostilities to organize

1 H.A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, revised edition (1956), pp.286-7.

their outpost's very important and very profitable trade. The first change to take place on the lake in the new era was an immediate abandonment of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Wedderburn in favour of the much more comfortable North West establishment, Fort Chipewyan. Once ensconced in its new home the Company set about regularizing a fur trade that had been profoundly upset by the vicissitudes of the conflict era. Putting the trade on a saner basis was as important to the preservation of continued good returns as it was to the well-being of the traders and trappers engaged in it.

The main problem in the fur trade before the union was the demoralization of the Indians, a condition that had come about as a product of the lavish expenditures of goods and liquor made by each rival fur company in an attempt to induce the Indians to trade with them rather than their rival. The extravagance of white inducements to trade was such as to harm both the trade and the Indians. The Indians, wrote George Simpson in 1821, "are completely spoiled, have laid aside their industrious habits, and take advantage of the Opposition, so that while it continues, the profits to the contending parties must be very slender."² With the easy availability of trade goods chiefs lost the respect of their followers and control over them, the result being vice, crime and indolence. It was a very serious situation:

When rival white men outbid each other for his furs, and still more for his provisions, the Indian exploited to the full the advantages which competition in a seller's market gave to him; he became greedy, idle, insolent, and so improvident that the trade was in serious danger of

2 Chester Martin (ed), Simpson's Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department, 1820 and 1821, and Report, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1938), p. 356; hereafter cited as Simpson's Journal.

complete ruin and himself in danger of starvation. ³

Whilst they were taking advantage of the rivalry, liquor was the only means by which both furs and provisions could be gotten from the Indians. Simpson put it very candidly when he said, in referring to the Cree (although he could have applied it to any of the tribes in the northwest): "a little rum you know operates like a charm on the Crees, they cannot resist the temptation, and if the bait is properly managed every skin may be had from them."⁴ While liquor was quite lavishly employed in this capacity, it must be borne in mind that it was not treated in the same light as hatchets, steel traps, guns, or other trade commodities. There was, in short, no question of setting a quantity of spirits against a quantity of furs or provisions. As Rich put it,

Always there persisted something of the idea of gift exchange, and always there persisted something of a ceremonial and social intercourse, in the trade between whites and Indians: and spirits had their place in both contexts. It was the presence of spirits, and the giving of spirits rather than the trading of spirits, which brought the Indian down to trade. The quantity given varied according to the circumstances, not in any strict relation to the number of furs.⁵

It served a function not unlike the one it does in our business transactions today — a preliminary drink created a convivial atmosphere conducive to negotiations, while a concluding libation set the seal on a bargain made.

3 E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870. Volume Two: 1763-1870, London, The Hudson's Bay Record Society (1959), p.228; hereafter cited as Rich, History. Cf. also Innis, p.270, and J.M. Parker's unpublished master's thesis, The Fur Trade of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska, 1778-1835, The University of Alberta (1967), p.200.

4 Simpson's Journal, p.89.

5 "The Indian Traders", The Beaver (Winter 1970), pp. 18-19.

That the competition resulted in an increase in the amount of spirits introduced into the northern land among the Indians there can be no doubt: the two rival North West Companies — the 'Old Concern' and the X.Y. Company — doubled their importation to Canada of spirits between 1800 and 1803, from about 10,000 gallons to about 21,000; the Hudson's Bay Company imported between 4,000 and 6,000 gallons.⁶ However, it cannot be calculated from these figures the degree to which the spirits were diluted before being given to the Indians. It is likely that the traders tried to keep the libations as weak as possible in order to refrain from ruining the Indians' hunting abilities, a skill on which the whites' existence very often depended.⁷

The end of the rivalry and the victor's wish to consolidate and begin recouping losses resulted in an end being put to the extravagant distribution of gifts; putting an end to the presence of liquor in the northwest was never totally successful. Within the interior of its holdings — and not along the West Coast or the international boundary — the Company met with considerable success. Liquor was withdrawn from the trade at Fort Chipewyan in 1826, and in 1835 the Council of the Northern Department prohibited all classes of its employees in the English River, Athabasca, and Mackenzie River districts from using spirits.⁸ The abolition of the use of spirits at Fort Chipewyan was apparently quite readily accepted, and, if Simpson is to be believed, created a most beneficial change among the Indians. "Liquor," he wrote,

they never talk of now, and it is singular enough that those Indians, who but a few years ago were nearly unmanageable, from the bad habits contracted

6 Rich, History, pp. 228-9; MacKay, p. 243.

7 Innis, p. 268.

8 MacKay, p. 247.

in the hottest opposition ever known in the Indian Country; should be the first to fall in with our wishes, in simplifying the Trade by reducing it to a regular system of buying & Selling in barter....⁹

With activities in the trading posts put upon a sounder footing Fort Chipewyan was able to settle down to its role as a keystone in the Hudson's Bay Company's trade in the Arctic drainage system. Four trading departments were organized in 1821, the most important of which was the Northern Department whose area included the territory between Hudson Bay and the mountains, and between the United States and the Arctic Ocean.¹⁰ Over the course of time the posts in the area reporting to Fort Chipewyan were Great Slave Lake, Fort Vermilion, Fort Dunvegan, Fort St. John, Salt River (now Fort Smith), and, following 1853, Fond du Lac. From time to time the Hudson's Bay Company stationed men at the old Northwesters' post which had been near their own Harrison's House and where there was a good fishery. Moreover, said William Brown,¹¹ "Harrison's House is the principal post for procuring dressed deer skins — Babiche — and sinew — as it is situated close to the Chipewyan lands...." After 1853 the company operated Harrison's House on a more permanent basis.

In addition to being the depot and focal point of the trade in the northern district, Fort Chipewyan acquired added importance as a storage point for the furs from the Mackenzie River area that could not be sent to

9 E.E. Rich (ed), Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1947), p.8; hereafter cited as Simpson 1828.

10 Innis, p. 285; the other three departments were: 1) Montreal; 2) the Southern; and 3) the Western; figures of returns illustrating the importance of the Northern Department will be found in ibid., p. 286.

11 Report of the Athabasca Lake District, 1820-21; B39/e/3.

York Factory in one season because of the distances involved, and for the fur returns from posts in New Caledonia.

As in the earliest days of the trade in northern Canada the backbone of the transportation system needed to supply this network of posts whose arbiter was Fort Chipewyan was the French Canadian or Metis voyageur, the Scottish boatman (usually Orkneymen), and, at times, negroes,¹² and the canoes and York boats they manned. The journey between York Factory and Fort Chipewyan was easier than the old one from Montreal, but none but an experienced voyageur would be able to distinguish between the labour involved in navigating the two routes. York Factory was the major terminus of vessels from England, and from that establishment on Hudson Bay were shipped to Norway House all the goods that went to the third depot in the chain, Fort Chipewyan. The distances involved a carry-over of one year in the shipment of goods to the northernmost posts, for goods arriving at Norway House one year were forwarded about the middle of June in the following year by the Methye Portage brigade. The brigade from Norway House arrived at the portage in time to meet the eastward bound brigade from the Mackenzie district posts and exchange trade goods for furs.¹³ The Athabasca brigade brought its furs to Norway House and returned with the needed supplies. James Keith recorded for us the stages of one such journey inward from York Factory:

Their Progrefs inwards as follows — 15 days from YFactory to Split Lake thence to Burntwood Carrying Place on Height of Lands that divides the York & Churchill Waters 13 days thence to Frog Portage the Point of junction between the Haye River Norway H. & Nelson Routes 10 days — thence to Isle a la Crofse

12 Ibid. In the spring of 1819 two men were drowned at the rapids where the Peace River runs into the Slave, one "a Canadian", and the other, George Crozier, a negro.

13 Innis, p. 291.

10 days, thence to Portage Loche [Methye Portage] (including & in that River) 10 In the Portage 5 & thence hither in 7 days. 73 days in all....

There were about forty portages where Boats and canoes had to be transported, " & about as many discharges or Partial carrying places where only part or the whole of the Canoes require to be transported equal to 80...."¹⁴ The journey to which Keith referred was probably an exceptionally slow one; most others that we know of took much less time, although there may have been extenuating circumstances involved: most averaged around 40 days, while George Simpson, on his journey to the Pacific in 1828, in an express canoe manned by picked voyageurs, made the journey just six hours short of a month.¹⁵ While the duration of the journey may have varied, its arrival time apparently followed a quite rigid schedule as it had to if supplies were to reach the various posts before freeze-up. The person who kept the Fort Chipewyan post journal in 1858 grew increasingly anxious as the days advanced into the third week of September with the Brigade not yet arrived. It finally arrived on September 23, apparently a record that was not broken until 1869, when it arrived at the extraordinarily advanced date of October 4.¹⁶

From the supplies obtained with the arrival of the brigades the Company's employees would outfit the Indians with the goods — clothes, guns, and steel traps — needed to enable them to trap during the winter months when the furs are prime. The work of the fur trade in the Athabasca Department

¹⁴ Fort Chipewyan Post-Journal, entry for 29 September 1823, B.39/a/22. This chapter could not have been written had it not been for the generosity of the Hudson's Bay Company in allowing the author access to its records.

¹⁵ Simpson, 1828, p. xxii.

¹⁶ B. 39/a/44b (1858), and B. 39/a/47 (1869).

appears to have been done very efficiently. Alexander Stewart was Chief Factor in Athabasca in 1828, and when Simpson was there the same year gave him the following commendation:

I shall now conclude my observations on Athabasca Department, by saying, that I cannot see room for any amendment in the management of its affairs; the business being conducted with great regularity and OEconomy, the Indians in the highest order, the Country in excellent condition and the result of the Trade as flattering as we could reasonably desire.¹⁷

Part of the efficient conduct of the fur trade involved seeing to the continued supply of the furred animals whose presence in the area was the sole reason for the establishment of Fort Chipewyan. In this respect nearly 150 years ago the Hudson's Bay Company was certainly the first corporation to think of or practise conservation in Canada. In 1825 the Northern Council directed against killing beaver in the summer months. Executing the order involved no small amount of bargaining with the trappers, as Stewart recorded:

It was not without some difficulty [that] we could fall upon the best Plan of procuring a few Beaver and leaving some in increase. The generality were for killing none for 3 years, to this however I would not consent, and as their selfish and distrustful disposition could not be reconciled to take but a few out of every Bvr House, for fear others coming behind, not being so scrupulous. I therefore proposed that they should Hunt the Beaver during the winter only, and on the first breaking of the Ice, they were to desist and to kill no more, until November following, to which they with one voice agreed.¹⁸

Most of the trappers were fully aware of the importance to their continued supply of the white man's goods of maintaining a steady number of fur-bearing animals in the region. It appears that only the Indians alien to the area trapped without regard to the future. William Brown, a Hudson's Bay

17 Simpson, 1828, p. 10.

18 24 September 1826, B.39/a/25.

Company officer at Fort Wedderburn, wrote in his spring report for 1821 that between 1790 and 1795 the North West Company brought a number of Iroquois into the region, aliens who had no concern for the continued supply of beaver.¹⁹ The Indians who were native to the Athabasca region acted in a most provident manner. Said Brown of one tribe: "The Beaver Indians had a regulation amongst them that when they took a beaver house always to leave two of the young ones alive and never to kill a female when with young."²⁰

Simpson wrote even more glowingly about the Chipewyan :

their country is in good condition and improving every successive year: they are without exception the best Beaver hunters we know, rarely kill except when the animal is in Season, use the Ice Chissel principally, never destroy all the inmates of a Lodge and generally allow three or four years elapse before revisiting their last Hunting grounds.²¹

It was probably the coordinated effort by the fur traders and trappers that enabled the Athabasca district to be given the second highest fur quota in the northwest: 5,000 beaver as opposed to the Saskatchewan district's 5,500.²²

Normally there were not many impediments to the successful hunting of beaver and other fur-bearing animals, although quirks in the seasonal cycles and the unique nature of Lake Athabasca's water system could set problems in the trappers' way. An abnormally early spring could keep the trappers from bringing in their furs or a mild winter render the furs of little value. For instance, in 1825 James Keith²³ declared that the spring hunt for rats was

19 Report of the Athabasca Lake District, 1820-1821, B.39/e/3; the report is dated 12 May, 1821. Cf. also Simpson's Journal, p. 384.

20 Ibid.

21 Simpson, 1828, pp. 7-8.

22 Innis, pp. 325-6.

23 Op. cit., Fort Chipewyan Post-Journal 1824 - 1825.

almost an entire failure and this he attributed to a combination of the peculiar state of the ice and water and "the annoyance from foxes and wolverines — last year this place turned out about 8,000 muskrats and this year a little above 3,000." Similarly, on September 29, 1834, the Hudson's Bay Company's factor wrote that "the musquash that had been so plentiful for this last two seasons have disappeared, the low water destroys them."

In his annual report for 1820-21 William Brown²⁴ at Fort Chipewyan, harking back a few years, stated:

In the year seventeen ninety-five and eighteen twelve an epidemic distemper took place amongst the beaver which carried off great numbers of them.

The Musquashes are a species of animals whose numbers depend entirely upon the state of the lakes and rivers — for when the water is high for a few years they become very numerous but when low they entirely disappear.

Other Hudson's Bay Company traders made similar comments, as when in 1827 Alexander Stewart wrote:

Our Hunters accompanied with several other Chipewyans paid us a visit saying they are much disappointed in the [Musk] Rat Hunt. the water in all the small Lakes having withdrawn in consequence of the cold, thereby leaving the Rat Houses on dry land, when the inhabitants must of course have froze, and ultimately destroy some thousands of those little animals.²⁵

Since fluctuating lake levels were very important factors in the lives of fur-bearers, natives and traders, it is not surprising that in his 1820-21 report Brown²⁶ should comment on the question of the formation of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. He said:

This lake appears to have been much larger but the waters of the Athabasca and Peace Rivers carry such a

²⁴ Op. cit.

²⁵ 27 March 1827, B39/a/25.

²⁶ Op. cit.

large quantity of wood, mud, and earth down with them particularly on the breaking open of the ice in the spring that a large portion of it on the west end has been filled up and forms several other lakes some of which are of considerable extent... such as Lac Clair....

The various chief factors of Fort Chipewyan, however, had many problems of more immediate concern to occupy their thoughts. Once the feverish activity involved in getting the season's trade was over, the residents of the fort could turn their attention to preparing for the coming of winter. The buildings would be patched, the chimneys tested, and wood cutting operations put in motion. At the same time as their shelter was being seen to, the residents would begin looking to the laying in of provisions. This was an aspect of life at Fort Chipewyan regarding which there could be no levity or anything but the most sedulous adherence to its demands. Any trader not convinced of the overriding necessity of laying in adequate provisions had only to remember the sixteen men who perished of starvation in the 1815-1816 trading season to be jolted out of his complacency.

The demand for meat at the fort was very high, the standard daily ration per man, when the yield of the forests allowed, was eight pounds of fresh meat or two pounds of pemmican. Securing anything approaching that quantity of meat demanded the skills of people who were intimately familiar with both the country about the lake and the ways of the animals which lived there. No amount of white application to mastering the requisite skills could preempt the skills of one who was born there, and it is for that reason that the majority of the fresh meat consumed at the fort was provided by Indian hunters. Hunting required continuous application and did not permit of any fur trapping on the side. The half-dozen or so Indians employed as fort hunters had therefore to be given special considerations that allowed them to hunt for game and secure the whites' manufactured goods. One such

contract has come down to us from the journal kept by James Keith in 1823-1824.²⁷

This Branch of our subsistence is procured on the following conditions. The Hunters are supplied with the requisite Clothing guns & [other needs?] for the Winter valued at the Fur standard new system which amount is accordingly placed together [illegible] in deduction or Payment whereof they are allowed for every [live?] animal Female, Buffaloe or Moose deer 5 M[ade] Beavr & for every male of the same specie 4M.B.— for every full grown rein Deer half the foregoing prices & for younger animals in Proportion, but are only paid for what they furnish to the Fort & not for their own consumption are supplied with a reasonable quantity of ammunition & Tobacco gratuitously & for every ten animals furnished are allowed 3/4 Quart spirits equal to 1 Full Indian rum.

Provision was made too for the meat supplied by "casual" hunters:

But animals or occasional fresh supplies procured from Indians not employed as Fort Hunters, are paid double the above number of M Beavr but conformably to the Provision Standard & exclusively with Ammunition, Tobacco & Rum of each of which only half the Fur Standard is allowed....

While the Chipewyan had a reputation as the best beaver hunters in the region, it was the Cree who were regarded as superior hunters. A particular superstition among the Chipewyan had a large part in making it so. Simpson explains the superstition in this manner, but we need not unreservedly believe his final words:

...it is an unfortunate characteristic of the Chipewyans, that if unsuccessfull for any length of time in the early part of the season, their superstitions gain such an ascendancy over them, and they become so fully impressed with the idea that some evil genius haunts them, that they give themselves up entirely to despair; they become careless, neglect their hunts, lay dormant in their encampments for weeks together, while a morsel of Leather or Babiche remains to keep them in existence, at length

to escape the miseries of famine, they murder their Families and perish without a single exertion. Whole bands of these poor wretches are annually consigned to oblivion in this melancholy way; when in this situation they are deaf to all argument and entreaty.²⁸

It is said of the Chipewyan that although they were not as successful in the hunt as the Cree, they did not suffer as much from privation as the latter because they were more provident.²⁹

These and other observations give only the traders' assessment of the Indians. Unfortunately their opinions, the only written ones we have, undoubtedly painted a darker picture than the same facts when seen from the natives' point of view would warrant. The red men and the white possessed cultures which varied so greatly from each other that neither race could effectively part the curtain that kept their ideas apart. Although the Indians' customs, beliefs and practices seen through the white man's eyes may have looked strange, the natives of the region had developed them in their response to gaining a livelihood from a harsh, forbidding, and unforgiving land. We should hesitate before judging these native practices too harshly.

Abnormal springs could affect the yield of the moose hunter as much as that of the trapper. One particular spring condition was especially dreaded:

Throughout Peace River the early part of the Spring was mild, and thereafter the frost became very intense forming a crust on the snow, the crackling of which alarmed the animals and prevented the hunters approaching within gun shot of them altho' they were daily within sight of large herds; many of the Beaver Indians have been starved to death, one of our Iroquois, and three belonging to the North West Coy, have shared the same fate, our Fort Hunter Baptiste Bisson, who is without exception the best large animal hunter in North America

28 Simpson's Journal, p. 197.

29 Brown, op. cit.

lived entirely on parchement for several weeks, and whole families of Indians existed solely on singed Beaver Skins³⁰

Surmounting that particular condition required patience such as Job would have admired: G.J. Tranter recounted the following story told him by an Indian boy:

Many times my father has gone out and he has had to cut pieces of the crust out with his knife and remove them to one side so that he would have room to put his feet down in the soft snow underneath, without being heard by the keen ears of the moose....Cutting your way step by step without being heard, after tramping several days, leaves you very tired.³¹

In spite of some difficult times when both white and red men at Fort Chipewyan experienced periods of drastic scarcity of food, on the whole the traders fared well. While the amount of provisions purchased by the company and consumed there during the season ending June 1, 1821, was perhaps less than in many another year, it was nevertheless a respectable amount, and as tallied up by William Brown was:

Fish	- No. 28,264	Tongues - 28 lbs.
Fat	- 351 lbs.	Swans - No. 3
Fresh Meat	- 7,587 lbs.	Geese - No. 427
Dry Meat	- 1,960 lbs.	Ducks - No. 12
Beat Meat	- 593 lbs.	

The extent of the demand for fresh meat and the problems arising in meeting it were such as to make recourse to the resources of the lake absolutely necessary. Indeed, James Keith claimed that the fishery was the

30 Simpson's Journal, p. 338.

31 Link to the North, London, Hodder and Stoughton Limited (1946), p. 77.

principal branch of their subsistence.³² While there was normally available a more than sufficient quantity of fish from the lake, it was not of the most satisfactory quality, and even a change in that regard would not have eliminated the insufferable monotony of a diet whose principal component was fish. Keith, our tireless chronicler, described the whitefish as being "of a middle size nearly 3 lb ea. though of a soft, watery & unsubstantial quality...."³³

Although the schools of fish did not remain stationary there appear to have been three fishing locations upon which major dependence was placed. The first was the site of the fort Roderick McKenzie built in 1788 (Old Fort Point), the second and third Goose and Bustard Islands (the latter then known as Big Island). The fishing in the summer months was good near the site of the post-1804 Fort Chipewyan but in the fall a lowering of the water level caused the fish to move to the deeper and clearer waters of the eastern end of the lake — hence the importance of the three principal fishing sites to the increased numbers of people who came to live on Lake Athabasca following the arrival of the fall brigade.³⁴

Experts were employed for fishing as they were for hunting. The most expert fishermen were Orkney men and French Canadians and were despatched to their posts solely on the basis of their abilities. An establishment such as Fort Chipewyan would have perhaps three or four fishermen. They and their assistants would live at the fisheries in all seasons. Their lot and tasks were not especially onerous in the summer months, but were so in the winter when nets had to be laid under the ice and tended several times each day.

32 Op. cit., B. 39/a/22.

33 9 September 1823, B. 39/a/22.

34 Parker, p.48.

It appears that the Indians were responsible for teaching the whites how to set nets beneath the ice, just as they were responsible for teaching them so many of the other secrets so necessary for survival in the northern woodlands. Samuel Hearne wrote that the northern Indians' nets were made of thongs cut from raw deer skin, or twigs fashioned into nets while held under water to make them supple.³⁵ The whites of course used nets made of twine but the method of fishing with them under ice was the Indians'. A church historian explained the procedure employed:

The first thing to be done if we wish to net fish that are under the ice is to make an oblong opening in a well-chosen spot. The hole is made with a hatchet, or, if the ice be very thick, with a long-handled sharp trench tool. The opening must be large enough to permit the insertion of a wooden bar about 30 feet long, which, floating, will remain pressed against the ice. A crook, or bent stick, in a strong and skilful hand, will guide this bar or pole towards another and smaller opening, made 30 feet away, where it will be seized by another skilful hand, and held fast until the man with the crook or bent stick comes along to guide the pole once more for another 30 feet. This operation is repeated several times according to the length of the net. The pole, drawn up to the surface through the last opening, is seen to have a cord attached, the other end of which is still on the ice at the first opening. To that end the net is now fastened. At the last of the openings, a careful and patient man begins to pull the cord. It is already beneath the ice at the first opening, and it takes the net with it, which is folded in such manner that the stones for ballast fall first without touching the floats of cork or fir. As the cord is gently pulled at the last opening, the net gradually spreads itself out, and hangs swaying in the lake. It is held and kept tight by a stake at either end, let down far enough to hinder the floats from touching the ice walls, to which they would be frozen fast. There is a horizontal bar over the opening in the ice, and upon this bar the

35 J. B. Tyrrell (ed), A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean In the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1911), p. 265n.

stake is made to keep its perpendicular position by weight and by crook.³⁶

The problems presented to the fishermen in summer and winter conditions were straightforward and required stamina and application to be mastered — a difficult, but not impossible demand. But in the remaining two seasons — spring break-up and autumn freeze-up — no amount of hardiness or devotion to the task was sufficient to overcome the barriers set in their path by nature, especially when she chose to be capricious. Neither event followed its schedule very closely, and the frequent perversity of both made hazardous the task of procuring the fish and served to drastically reduce the yield. The problem lay in the presence on the lake during both seasons of large masses of rapidly moving ice. Their mass and motion made the use of boats perilous and the employment of their precious nets foolish. The records from Fort Chipewyan suggest that there was never an adequate supply of either nets or the twine from which they were made, so that the sweeping away by ice floes of a number of nets could be potentially disastrous to the people in the fort who, in those two lean seasons, were very dependent upon the fish caught. The two-fold hazard — to life and nets — of fishing in spring and autumn when the ice floes were present necessitated the abandonment of that occupation until the time came when either the lake was free of ice and boats could be employed, or, if it were autumn, frozen to the extent judged capable of sustaining the men and animals employed in catching and bringing in the catch. Since the weather could be very fickle and the termination of the period of transition postponed indefinitely, both spring and autumn could involve great hardships, both to the people in the fort and to those unwillingly forced into hungry

36 Reverend Pierre Duchaussois, O.M.I., Hidden Apostles: Our Lay Missionaries, Ottawa, Ottawa University (1937), p. 189.

idleness at the fisheries. Some comments culled from the post's journal reveal the anxieties met in these critical weeks. Decoigne wrote on May 20, 1818,³⁷ "the Lake hereabouts is all covered over with drift ice. Could not visit our nets as they were all covered with ice — our men have nothing to eat." An unknown chronicler reported that at the fishery "two nets have been lost and the people there are in a starving state, the ice is still too weak to admit of setting nets, but the first cold weather will remove all danger for the safety of the nets...."³⁸ On November 16, 1850, the fishermen had to return to the fort, and brought with them the following story: "they report to us that they were very near going under the ice yesterday in visiting the nets the ice broke they say and carried away 17 Dogs & 3 sledges. they fear the Dogs are lost[;] 10 nets also gone but they think they will find [six?] of them."³⁹

Changes in the water level in any season could also adversely affect the yields, although seldom as dramatically as could ice problems. Abnormally high water — "this is the eighth day [we] have heard from our fishermen [;] the water has attained a most unusual height, consequently there is no fish"⁴⁰ was as undesirable as low — "The fishery is not productive, owing to the extreme low state of the water...."⁴¹ One night the water rose so high and so fast that the fish carter's canoe was carried away as he slept.⁴²

Whether the yield from the fisheries was poor, average, or good, it

37 B.39/a/13.

38 26 October 1837, B. 39/a/36.

39 B.39/a/42.

40 1 July 1854, B. 39/a/43.

41 27 November 1837, B. 39/a/36.

42 9 August 1844, B. 39/a/41.

had to be transported to the fort, and the fishing establishments kept supplied. The distances involved were considerable: Goose Island was about ten miles from the fort, Bustard eighteen, and Old Fort Point twenty-one. Canoes and boats — the latter were first constructed at Fort Chipewyan in 1823⁴³ — were used for cartage when the water was free of ice, and dogs, horses, and oxen when it was frozen over, the last two only when there were insufficient dogs for the task. Carting the fish yield in winter was probably much the easier undertaking although one interesting ice condition deserves our notice: the carters, wrote one chronicler, "complain much of the Slippery Ice which is very fatiguing to their Dogs [;] the poor Animals cannot get footing [;] part of the Lake is as smooth as a Mirror."⁴⁴

The yield so carted from the fisheries was usually sufficient for at least immediate needs, and often allowed a surplus. Some indications of good yields follow: Robert Miles wrote "The fishery at Bustard Island is very productive, they have taken for some days past, upwards of three hundred fish daily."⁴⁵ The yield from fisheries on the same island next spring was about one hundred and fifty per day.⁴⁶ Figures of total yields when times were good are much more impressive: up to January 31 in the 1834-1835 outfit over 17,000 fish were caught, of which figure 15,348 were brought to the fort;

43 Innis, p. 292.

44 20 November 1832, B. 39/a/29.

45 31 October 1818, B. 39/a/14.

46 7 April 1819, B. 39/a/14.

up to March 8 the fort had received 22,444 fish.⁴⁷ The writer of the following had every reason to be complacent: "In the course of the Winter we have received from both fisheries of all kinds of fish 30,179 and at present we have in store 17,000 [which] I presume will be sufficient till the opening of the navigation."⁴⁸ Yields on that scale allowed generous rations to be given the people at the fort. Estimates of the daily ration per man range from three-four pounds to eight pounds.⁴⁹

Storing the surplus fish caused no problem in winter for any shed sealed against hungry animals would serve as a perfect freezer. Storing foods for the summer pending the arrival of the autumn brigade required more ingenuity and involved the construction of what was called an ice house. It was a deep hole whose sides were supported by log walls and whose top, which was above the ground, was covered with a double roof of thick thatch set two or three feet apart. Ice was placed between them, or water poured over the food and allowed to freeze.⁵⁰ Goods not put into ice houses were preserved with salt gathered from Salt River one hundred miles below Fort Chipewyan on the Slave River.

But there was no need to worry about storage facilities in times when the yield from the lake was poor. An entry such as the following heralded the beginning of a period of considerable privation: "Fine warm weather.

47 B. 39/a/30; the word "outfit" indicates a trading year beginning in the autumn.

48 14 February 1832, B. 39/a/29.

49 Cf. John W. Chalmers, "Social Stratification of the Fur Trade", Alberta Historical Review, vol. 17, no. 1 (Winter 1969), p. 16 for the former figure, and Parker, p. 51, for the latter.

50 Simpson's Journal, pp. 316-317n.

Thermometer 73. Bad news from the fishery. Laprise is taking no Fish Saturday with 10 nets he took only 5 white Fish & this mornings visit with 11 nets gave only 3 Fish."⁵¹ Then we read of another type of entry: "The rations were stoped to day having more men here than we can afford to feed."⁵² Rations, if not actually stopped, could be drastically reduced. On December 17, 1825, James Keith was forced to cut the ration to two fish per man, one-half per woman, and one-quarter per child.⁵³ A harsh solution to the problem was to supply the residents with hooks, lines, and portions of nets and send them to the fisheries to fend for themselves. Necessity at times compelled the policy to be extended even to distinguished guests. When, on his way to the Arctic Ocean, Captain John Franklin was in Fort Chipewyan 1819-1820 and asked the Hudson's Bay Company personnel there for food for members of his expedition he was told to send his men to fish for themselves, "for we have not a sufficiency of fish for ourselves." William Brown tried to ease the bluntness of necessity by assuring Franklin that "I understand that from 20 to 30 fish may be taken per. day out of half a net at Lac Clair."⁵⁴ A much later chronicler under similar straightened circumstances ruminated that he could get fowl from the Indians, "but then our stock of

51 31 July 1836, B.39/a/36.

52 Fort Chipewyan Post-Journal, Alberta Legislature Library, 6 May 1822.

53 B. 39/a/24.

54 8 and 10 July 1820, B.39/a/16; see also Chapter Four of Franklin's Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819, 20, 21, and 22, London (1823).

ammunition will not afford us to employ hunters to Kill Game."⁵⁵

It was both to relieve the insufficiency of the meat supply and the extreme monotony that dependence upon fish entailed that a serious attempt was made to grow vegetables. Pond's Old Establishment boasted the first garden in the province. Undoubtedly he planted it within a year or so after he built his post in 1778. The first written account of it had to wait another nine years until Alexander Mackenzie wrote of arriving there, saying that Pond "had formed as fine a kitchen garden as I ever saw in Canada."

Peter Fidler had a garden on English Island in 1803, but it yielded only one bushel of turnips and ten gallons of potatoes from five gallons of seed — a very poor ratio. Fidler blamed it on the sterility of the ground and the harshness of the climate where frost could come in mid-August.⁵⁶ The 1804 yield was slightly better: seven bushels of potatoes and three of turnips.⁵⁷ In the era of the conflict Brown noted that the North West Company had tried to grow barley, potatoes, and other garden crops, "but they never came to maturity", probably because of a lack of attention.⁵⁸

Work on the garden did not usually begin until the end of May, although one planting was recorded on 13 May.⁵⁹ Foods planted included barley, turnips, peas, onions, radishes and cabbages; the most important crop was

55 29 September 1838, B. 39/a/35.

56 Parker, pp. 89-91.

57 18 September 1804, B. 39/a/4.

58 Report, op. cit.; Cf. Simpson's Journal, p. 364: "The North West pay little or no attention to horticulture in this District."

59 B.39/a/23.

potatoes. Suitable garden spots were so few in number that every reasonably promising site was employed (including the site of Fidler's Old Fort),⁶⁰ although the most extensive planting was done on Coal Island. It is likely that it was the extent of the horticulture practised there that led to that island's being renamed Potatoe Island. It is hard country in which to plant food, and those who essayed it did not fail to meet occasional frustrations. Turnips always seemed to be the hardest hit: "The turnips sown at the Old Fort [Point?] I fear [will] be all destroyed by the insects which is a pity as they promised well";⁶¹ on 7 October 1824 three bushels of turnips were taken in "which had not attained maturity."⁶² Nor did other crops escape difficulties: "In the afternoon Morin crofsed to Coal Island to thrash the Barley was not able to finish, it is not yet dry the potatoes are still thriving, not so those on this side which have been frozen some time back & are not much better than a trading ball [.]"⁶³ On 23 July 1822 we read: "The Potatoes froze last night so our trouble for this duty is uselefs What can not be helped must be endured."⁶⁴ In spite of the occasional lament about labour being but poorly rewarded, garden yields could sometimes be quite impressive. From twelve bushels of potatoes secured from three planted in 1824⁶⁵ the yield grew fitfully in later years to 290 kegs in 1853,⁶⁶ and to a whopping 400 kegs in

60 10 June 1828, B.39/a/25.

61 3 July 1836, B. 39/a/36.

62 B.39/a/23.

63 B. 39/a/36.

64 Journal held in the Alberta Legislature Library.

65 6 October, B. 39/a/23.

66 1 October, B. 39/a/43.

1860⁶⁷. Even much smaller yields were still appreciated: "Finished getting in our Potatoes in all 75 Kegs of 8 Gallons. They are small, but still a great luxury [when eaten] with our poor Fish."⁶⁸

Cattle appear to have been brought to the Dunvegan area around 1833; they are first mentioned as being in Fort Chipewyan in 1835 in Captain George Back's Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition, (London, 1836):

On the 23d of May, some boats laden with furs, &c. arrived from the post on Peace River, whence they also brought a cow and calf, and thereby supplied us with luxuries till then untasted at Chipewyan.⁶⁹

Others seem to have come shortly thereafter, for in the post journal entry for 10 December 1835 we read: "One of the cows calved last night, I fear we shall lose the calf, the stable being cold...."⁷⁰ Four years later the herd had grown to twelve and included two bulls.⁷¹ It appears that Fort Chipewyan's resources did not extend to maintaining many more, for next month there was recorded the addition to the herd of a "cow calf" evoking the cry "we have too many already."⁷² There appear to have been two hay meadows, one on low-lying ground at the Quatre Fourches, the other on higher ground at some point along the Rocher River. Judging from one comment the two, even in combination, did not provide much hay: "This is but an Awkward Place to keep Cattle the

67 4 October, B. 39/a/44b.

68 6 October 1838, B. 39/a/35.

69 P. 465 of the 1970 Hurtig (Edmonton) edition.

70 B. 39/a/31; the stable had been finished on 11 November.

71 14 September 1839, B. 39/a/38.

72 15 November 1839, B. 39/a/38.

Country is as Covered with Rocks and the Pasture as Scant that the Cattle are seldom orever near the Establishment. The little Comforts Obtained by keeping them are hourly paid for....⁷³ Apart from insufficient food Fort Chipewyan was in general a not very hospitable place for cattle. The chronically underfed and predatory dogs were a major concern. The problem was recognized almost as soon as the first cattle arrived, for we see in the entry for 10 June 1835: "Most of the dogs being now at the fishery the cow & calf are let out to graze, nor do the few dogs that remain attempt to touch them."⁷⁴ On 2 July 1837 we read "the Dogs are getting very troublesome, on two late occasions we have had much trouble to save the Calves from being devoured by them."⁷⁵ The dogs' troublesomeness — and resourcefulness — appeared to mount drastically, for on 15 June 1839 there was recorded the lament "Last night the Dogs got through the small Picket & Killed one of our Calves."⁷⁶

The first horses to reach Fort Chipewyan arrived long before the cattle did. Fortunately Peter Fidler was on hand to record their arrival:⁷⁷ "A Batteaux belonging to the Old Co. arrived here from their upper settlements in the Peace River with 3 horses — these are the first animals of the kind that was ever at this lake."

The Hudson's Bay Company Council for the Northern Department meeting at Norway House became concerned with the question of agriculture in the Peace

73 13 September 1839, B. 39/a/38.

74 B. 39/a/31.

75 B.39/a/34.

76 B.39/a/38.

77 Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, op. cit., p. 155.

River area and particularly with the amount of flour that had to be shipped into the northern areas. Its Minutes, dated June 1, 1833, said:

In order to save expense of transporting flour from the Depot to Athabasca and McKenzie's River District; it is (Resolved) That the Gentlemen in charge of posts in Peace River where the climate and soil are favourable to cultivation be directed to devote their attention to that important object forthwith, and it is intended that these districts shall depend on Peace River alone for their flour after the close of Outfit 1834.

Obviously Fort Chipewyan was no place to grow grain, but in what we know as the arable portion of the Peace River country the company's traders had already been giving the matter some thought, for William MacIntosh, writing from Fort Dunvegan to John Charles,⁷⁸ said:

...I can say little about farming in Peace River, all I know is that barley and potatoes thrive tolerantly well but I doubt if wheat will, for I have not before seen such as had been growing here, but that you may judge for yourself I send two samples of the growth of 1831 and 1832, there is no plough, no seed, nothing of the requisits of a farm. The mill is broke and unserviceable, how it got in this state is more than I can say...it certainly is an object worth trial to make flour for Athabasca, but I have no hope that anything of the kind will be effected with Canadians alone, there is no country better adapted for cattle, there is plenty of luxuriant grass and hay can be got in abundance if there were scythes to mow it.

We get some idea of the tenuous nature of life at Fort Chipewyan when we learn that the products of the Indians' hunting, the Orkneymen's fishing, the yields of the garden and cattle, plus whatever fowl could be killed were insufficient to ensure a steady supply of food. The problem would undoubtedly have been much easier to solve had there been living at the fort only the fur traders and boatmen, but it was compounded by the presence there of the native and, later, Metis women they married, and the children of these unions. Women

were as necessary to the men living at Fort Chipewyan as they were to Hearne's party on his trip to the Coppermine River. One writer commented that the men in Fort Chipewyan and other northern posts "had to have women to cook for them, make or repair their clothes, make homes for them, nurse them when sick, share their triumphs and happiness, share also their disappointments and sorrows, and bear the only children they might ever have."⁷⁹ Their presence, however, added to the problems of supplying the fort with sufficient food. The breakdown of the winter establishment at Fort Chipewyan in 1824-1825 included four officers, forty-nine employees, seventeen women and adult children, twenty-three children of both sexes, seven widows, boarders, pensioners, and five of their children, for a very large total of 105.⁸⁰ It grew to 111 the next year, fell to 70 in the following, and seemed to remain at two figures during the remainder of the period, the total being 78 in 1869-1870.⁸¹

While during much of every winter and summer the population of the community at Fort Chipewyan might be less than a hundred souls, the spring and fall brought renewed life to the shores of its bay. It was in those seasons that the Indians came in, bringing their furs to trade in the spring, and in the fall assembling again to receive credits of ammunition and supplies with which to trap throughout the coming winter. At both seasons practically all the Beaver, Cree, or Chipewyan who traded at the post camped for a short

⁷⁹ Chalmers, p. 19. This article centres upon Fort Chipewyan and is an excellent examination of social factors in the fur trade. For a recent treatment of northern Metis see Richard Slobodin, Metis of the Mackenzie District, Ottawa, Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology (1966); Chapter Three, "Sources of Data", has a complete examination of literature relating to the northern Metis.

⁸⁰ 15 October 1824, B. 39/a/23.

⁸¹ 22 August 1869, B. 39/a/47.

time along the lake shore, and Fort Chipewyan resounded with the howling of dogs and the merry shouts of children.

Parker,⁸² quoting from Hudson's Bay Company records for 1821-1822, indicates that at that time there were nearly 600 Chipewyan and Cree souls who considered Fort Chipewyan their trading post. Father Petitot states that in 1862 the population of Chipewyan and Cree trading at the fort was 900 and 300 respectively.⁸³ He added that by 1883 "the extraordinary decrease for many years in the waters of the rivers and lakes, which has destroyed the fish to an immense extent, and driven away wild fowl, having caused such a famine that many died of hunger and misery between 1879 and 1881.... Now there is but one single family of Crees at the lake, and the remnants of the tribe have gone away to join their fellows of the Peace River."

Although the tally of inhabitants of Fort Chipewyan itself may have remained relatively constant, the number of Metis families who considered its immediate environs as their home began a gradual increase. Moreover, when conditions in the fur trade had become more settled after 1821, the Indians all over the north started the practice of leaving their infirm or old people to camp near the fort, where in dire emergencies the white folk could ensure them against starvation. To have taken these invalids back with them and thereby to have exposed them to all the rigours of winter travelling in the inhospitable forest would not only have resulted in their deaths but would have formed a serious impediment to the progress of the fit. As a result, there was always a retinue of such enfeebled folk within hailing distance of

82 Op. cit. p. 188.

83 Reverend Emile Petitot, "On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory", The Canadian Record of Science, vol. 1 (1884-1885), pp. 51-52.

the fort.

To the difficulty of supplying food to so many people was added the recurring problem of diseases, serious when it broke out among the residents of the fort, and disruptive to the fur trade when it attacked the Indians who lived in the region. Measles, smallpox, whooping cough, and influenza are all mentioned as affecting the people in the fort and those living about the lake. Serious outbreaks of diseases are recorded so often that it is almost impossible to tell the difference between what is normal and what is exceptional in that regard. Some of the years in which more serious outbreaks of disease and starvation occurred and which were followed by general destitution are 1819-1820, 1828, 1835, 1837, 1842-1843, 1852, and 1865. Sickness among the Indians was enormously detrimental to their hunting and trapping. William Todd wrote on 27 October 1819 that:

the hooping Cough has...made its appearance, a disease particularly distresfing amongst the Indians as well for its long continuance as it[s] depriving them of the Means of subsistence the whole of their caution in approaching an animal being rendered abortive by a single cough.⁸⁴

Another entry in Todd's hand describes its effect upon the trade:

The trade appears to have suffered severely in this District from the privations of the measles & Whooping Cough which carried off a considerable number of the Indians & prevented the Survivors paying that attention to hunting furs they otherwise would have done.⁸⁵

To the general distress caused by the presence of diseases was added that caused by the Indians' mourning habits. Wrote Todd of some Indians who came to the fort, "several of them are almost naked having buried the greater part

84 B.39/a/15.

85 22 May 1820, B. 39/a/15.

of their clothing with their deceased relatives and are now making a demand for another supply."⁸⁶ In addition to giving distressed Indians whatever food and clothing was available, the residents of the fort did their best to assist in curing the diseases, although in at least one case it was not overly appreciated. The story is told of one ill Indian who

has been going through a course of mercury since April last, but its doubtful if he is perfectly well yet. however he will no longer submit to the necessary regimen conceiving as he cannot enjoy his share of the Fort Geese, he will remain no longer under such restraint. and instead of thanks he reproaches Mr. Stewart for having made him starve nearly two months such is the gratitude of a Chepewyane.⁸⁷

There is no doubt that in times of such distress the people living in the fort were better off than the Indians in that they at least had superior shelter and, hopefully, better stocks of food. When serious disease was not ravaging the country and when supplies of food were good the winter routine at the fort could be reasonably easy. James Keith noted that "[securing] Firewood and subsistence furnish employment to the majority of our Establishment...."⁸⁸ Housekeeping was a third element of the routine. Keith's general regulations governing winter life at the fort stated that

Houses [are] to be regularly washed & bedding aired & dusted at least every Fortnight and Cleanliness observed through the Week—no Nuisances to be committed in the Fort.⁸⁹

86 15 March 1820, B.39/a/15.

87 1 June 1828, B. 39/a/27.

88 8 October 1825, B. 39/a/24.

89 6 November 1823, B.39/a/22.

The fort itself made some interesting transitions over the years. It is not hard to understand why the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned Fort Wedderburn upon the union of 1821: in the winter of 1820 the ink froze upon Simpson's pen within four feet of the fireplace.⁹⁰ Fort Chipewyan was undoubtedly more comfortable, but not by much. By 1828 the buildings were reported to be in a state of decay⁹¹ as echoed by a disgusted comment made on 10 January, 1836: "We are freezing in our Barn of a House. Near the fire one side burns and the other freezes.... the man is unfortunate who is condemned to pass the winter in such a rotten Fabric in this climate."⁹² While considerable rebuilding appears to have taken place about 1835, it was not until 1872 that Roderick MacFarlane undertook a drastic reconstruction of the famous fort, leaving unaltered only the blacksmith shop. He built on the site of the original North West Company fort and insisted upon retaining the quite unnecessary palisades and bastions that belonged to a much earlier period in the fur trade. The end result was a vast improvement over the establishment inherited in 1821, although standards of comfort were less rigorous than they are today, as indicated by John Macoun's estimation of it:

Fort Chipewyan is situated on a peninsula at the west end of Lake Athabasca. Under the fostering care of Mr. Macfarlane, it has obtained the pre-eminence of being the Capitol of the North. All the buildings are of the most substantial character, are all shingled and white-washed, and present from the lake quite an imposing and beautiful appearance. Two large stores with glass windows, each sixty-three by thirty-one feet and seventeen feet high, stand next the landing. In a line with

90 Simpson's Journal, p. xliii.

91 Simpson, 1828, p. xxii.

92 From a fragment of a Fort Chipewyan Journal of questionable authenticity held in the library of the Alberta Legislature.

these stand eight houses, occupied by the employes of the Company, all white-washed, while in the rear, and between the two first mentioned stores, is the clerk's house, forty by thirty feet, and seventeen feet high. This building is well plastered, and was so warm last winter, (1874) from the heat of two stoves, that water did not freeze in it. On the left of the clerk's house, looking lakewards, is the general store, and on the right Mr. Macfarlane's own house, which is both warm and comfortable. Here the wanderer in the north is sure of a hearty welcome, and is apt to forget, while partaking of the hospitality of the Bourgeoisie, that 1,200 miles intervenes between him and the outskirts of civilization. 93

So, for decades, Fort Chipewyan, the capital of the North and the hub of the northern waterways, watched the coming and going of a succession of capable chief factors who presided over affairs in its vast domain .. While occasionally during its long reign hunger or disease harried its natives, the Beaver, Cree, and Chipewyan, on the whole they lived amicably and well with relatively little change in their fortunes or circumstances while they adjusted to the strange ways of the white men whom they found trustworthy and on whom they came to depend. Meanwhile, from time to time, other white men, scientists and explorers, Back, Dease, Simpson, and the unfortunate Sir John Franklin, passed through on their various expeditions. Meanwhile, too, a vastly different breed of strangers, covetous not for material goods, but for souls, wandered in — the missionaries with whom we shall deal in the next chapter.

93 John Macoun, "Geological and Topographical Notes On the Lower Peace and Athabasca Rivers", Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress for 1875-76, Ottawa (1877), "Report", p. 166.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MISSIONARIES AT FORT CHIPEWYAN

Piety was no stranger to the northwest, even in the earliest years of the monopoly era. There is an entry in the Minutes of Council of the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department for July 1823 where it is resolved

That for the more effectual civilization and moral improvement of the families attached to the different establishments and the Indians — Every Sunday when circumstances permit, divine Service be publicly read with becoming solemnity, either once or twice a day, to be regulated by the number of people and other circumstances, at which every man woman and child resident must attend, together with such of the Indians who may be at hand, as it may be found proper to admit.¹

Compliance with the resolution — which one Church historian believes "would appear to be a reiteration of the acknowledged customs of the years, not the initiation of a new and improved policy"² — is noted from an early date at Fort Chipewyan. James Keith's entry for Sunday, October 19, 1823, is indicative of the approach to piety at Fort Chipewyan:

In the forenoon, we availed ourselves of the earliest opportunity which the bustle of Outfits & occupation

1 R. Harvey Fleming (ed), Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31, Toronto, The Champlain Society (1940), p. 60.

2 T.C.B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, A History of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land and its Diocese from 1820 to 1950, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1962), p. xiii.

with Indians afforded of carrying into effect that part of the Minutes of Council connected with the observance of Sabbath & Improvement of morals, by inviting the allowance of the Europeans, to whom after repeating the Minutes in question & explaining the intention thereof, we read the Church of England Service followed by a Sermon, proposing hereafter to read these [alternately?] for the better accommodation of those of both Persuasions, & [of?] calling in the Families [each?] ensuing Sabbath, when it is our intention to invite the Canadians, provided we can find among the musty and mutilated remnants of a once extensive & well furnished Library a suitable book in their own language.

Keith then allowed himself to ruminate upon the beneficial aspects of such a practice:

Such Regulations if uniformly acted upon cannot fail of ultimately producing the most beneficent effects, by affording an opportunity to the Christian the Untutored, & the Savage of assembling together & uniting in one of the most solemn & obligatory acts which natural or Revealed Religion impose on Mankind — & one in which the All Benevolent Supreme Being may be presumed to look down with Complacency. Beautiful weather as in Summer.³

The makeup of the population at Fort Chipewyan was an important consideration as far as religious observance there is concerned. As Captain J.H. Lefroy put it in a letter from the fort dated 11 November, 1843: "by far the greater part of the whites in this country are Roman C. viz almost all the servants and labourers in the Company's employment; of the officers, the greater part are probably professedly Presbyterians, but none of a rigid stamp."⁴ It was no doubt the preponderance of people of the Roman persuasion that determined which Church feasts were celebrated at Fort Chipewyan. The

3 B.39/a/22.

4. George F.G. Stanley (ed), In Search of the Magnetic North. A Soldier-Surveyor's Letters from the North-West 1843-1844, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1955, p.71.

entry for November 1, 1821, All Saints' Day, ⁵reads,

This day being always observed by the Canadians as one of the most sacred in the year no work was done and a Glafs of Liquor was given to each of the men at the Fort.

Wondrous are the consolations of religion! The observance of the Catholic feasts did not of course receive the unstinted approbation of the fort's superior officer. The man who kept the chronicle in 1858 was particularly vocal in his grudging acceptance of the need to observe the Romish feasts, and wrote on June 29, 1858:

St. Peter's Day. kept holy & of course no work done. It is my humble opinion that St Peter does not care a d--n for the honor done to his memory this day: he certainly wont be so [mollified?] by such soft [sawder?] as to open Heaven's Gates to the fools who have this day neglected their duty to do him such mighty soap sud honors.

On another All Saints' Day the same man wrote, "All hands off duty, except the barbarians in the grand maison, who were close at the desk all day."⁷

Despite the occasional dissident note there was present among all the people at Fort Chipewyan and among the Indians who lived in the region a sincere desire to observe religious proscriptions. The same man who expressed his "humble opinion" about St. Peter's day recorded each Sunday the unfeigned delight he derived from the due observance of the Divine Service. He wrote the following in an earlier journal:

This day as usual we had the Satisfaction to hear many beautiful passages taken from the holy Bible: and nothing could be more

5 B.39/a/20.

6 B.39/a/44b.

7 B.39/a/44b.

8 Sunday, November 7, 1841, B.39/a/40.

impressive and perfect than the manner with which the reading was delivered....it were to be wished that every Establishment in the Country would endeavour to imitate such praise worthy and Christian like conduct: who with a christian heart in his bosom does not appreciate the honourable motives by which we must be governed in such proceedings in our humble opinion we think that no other mode could be adopted by which the religion of God could be most effectually upholden than by thus observing the Sabbath as a Day for the general Edification of the people.

The sentiment expressed above reached all the classes at the fort. Lefroy wrote of one French Canadian who brought a bottle of holy water from the Red River, "and his taking the trouble to do so shows that it is more their misfortune than their fault that they neglect the ceremonies of their religion."⁹ It must be men such as the one described who prepared the Indians to expect the arrival of the missionaries "who would one day come into the country, wearing a black robe, and without a wife."¹⁰

The Indians were apparently very desirous of receiving religious instruction. Wrote Lefroy,

It is interesting in this deep religious destitution to hear occasional anecdotes of the natural craving of men after some religion.... Mr. [Colin] Campbell the resident Factor here, was formerly among the Beaver Indians [some of whom were still about Fort Chipewyan] ; they would sometimes say to him "you are at leisure now, sit down and tell us of the Master of Life, and how we may become good livers." ¹¹

Lefroy was echoing — no doubt unconsciously — a sentiment expressed by the man who wrote the entry in the Fort Chipewyan Post-Journal for Sunday,

9 Stanley (ed), p. 94.

10 P. Duchaussois, O.M.I. (Oblates of Mary Immaculate), Hidden Apostles; Our Lay Missionaries, Ottawa, Ottawa University (1937), p. 25; cf. also A.G. Morice, O.M.I., The Catholic Church in the Canadian Northwest, Winnipeg (1936), p. 13.

11 Stanley (ed), p. 72.

June 5, 1842.¹²

The day otherwise passed in quietness & tranquility, no Indians even presuming to ask for a pipe of Tobacco which is worthy of remark, as it shows what an effect the little they have heard of Religion and the things concerning their eternal welfare has made upon their minds for the few with whom I have conversed upon the subject of Religion seemed very desirous of being instructed and of embracing Christianity.

Lefroy noted however, that "The Indians generally are losing most of their old
¹³
 superstitions without acquiring anything better."

The presence of a missionary among people so receptive to his calling could not but produce a great impact, as Lefroy, when mentioning the first missionary ever to visit Lake Athabasca, recorded in his letter of November 11,
¹⁴
 1843:

Last winter Mr. [James] Evans, the chief of the Wesleyan Mission, visited this post and those below it. He is a zealous and active man, as that long winter journey proved, and he held out hope to the Chipewyan Indians that a missionary would be sent among them....

It was, however, not the Wesleyans nor the Church of England that was to establish itself first in Fort Chipewyan, but the Roman Catholics, in spite of Lefroy's fears:

My dread is to see a R.C. missionary in these quarters. He would make all the half-breeds and many of the protestants of his creed. How can these neglected people draw nice distinctions? It is enough that a man comes and offers to teach them Christianity which they desire to know. If England neglects to make her religion and her Church co-extensive with her Empire, the consequences are hers.¹⁵

¹² B.39/a/41.

¹³ Stanley, (ed), p. 90.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

The man who was to be the vanguard of the Catholic Church in the Lake Athabasca region was Alexander Antonin Taché of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a French missionary order whose members Pope Pius IX was later to describe as
¹⁶
 "the Martyrs of the North." Taché had come to the Red River on August 25, 1845, while still an unordained brother; his ordination as a priest followed next October 22. In 1846 he accompanied Father Louis François Richer-Lafleur
⁷
 to Isle-à-la-Crosse, the site that was to become the headquarters for missionary work further north. Next year Taché crossed the Methye portage and went down the Athabasca River towards Fort Chipewyan, whose journal entry for September 2, 1847 reads "In the evening a Priest arrived in a Canoe from Isle
¹⁷
 à la Crosse." The response that his presence elicited is revealed by the
¹⁸
 results he obtained. Father Duchaussois writes that fowling was in full swing then, and that there were about two hundred Chipewyan and fifteen Cree hunters and their families gathered about the fort, "but they laid their guns aside, and left themselves entirely in the hands of the 'man of prayer'...." He celebrated the first Mass ever said in the region on September 5, and was well received by everyone everywhere. Although able to stay there only a brief three weeks, he nevertheless baptised 194 persons, mostly Chipewyan, and mostly children, their parents being left for consideration on a later

16 H.H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1956), p.247.

17 B.39/a/42.

18 Duchaussois, Mid Snow and Ice; The Apostles of the Far North, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd. (1923), p. 153.

visit.¹⁹

Taché returned for a visit next year and found those whom he had instructed still faithful to their good resolutions and promises, "although their fervid feelings in religious observances had grown somewhat cold."²⁰ The establishment there of a permanent mission could not come about until the addition of Father Joseph Faraud to the ranks of the Oblates serving in the north. Like all missionaries establishing a mission the site chosen was in the neighbourhood of the Hudson's Bay Company's post;²¹ in the case of the Catholic mission at Fort Chipewyan the site chosen was about a mile to the west of the fort on high, rocky ground overlooking the lake and a swamp. Faraud, in a pattern he was to repeat on mission establishments on Great Slave Lake and on the Peace River, built a little house and chapel, which he dedicated as the Nativity Mission on September 8, 1851.²² Despite his many travels to other missions, he made Lake Athabasca his headquarters for the ten-year period 1849-1859. The extent of his accomplishments there was amazing:

During my ten years here, I have succeeded in pushing matters forward for the benefit of the mission. The first year, I built a house and a chapel. The second year, I turned the swamps into fields and gardens. The third year, I built a new church, a new house, a kitchen, a stable, and a house for the men in our employment. Later on I began, and in four years I completed, a large church, which would not look too bad even in a town.²³

19 A.G. Morice, O.M.I., History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada. Volume 1: From Lake Superior to the Pacific (1659-1895), Toronto, The Musson Book Company, Limited (1910), pp. 205 and 207.

20 Duchaussois, Mid Snow and Ice, p. 154.

21 Dcuhaussois, Hidden Apostles, p. 22.

22 Mid Snow and Ice, p. 154.

23 Ibid, p. 120.

The mission was soon to have the resources to enable it to establish a subsidiary mission at Fond du Lac in 1853. Father Grollier went there with Hudson's Bay Company personnel when they reopened a fur trade post that had been abandoned about 1823. Our Lady of Seven Dolours mission was built on a bare and exposed cliff. Father Grollier's first sojourn there lasted the winter and spring of 1853-1854, for he had to return to the Nativity Mission to allow Father Faraud to visit Great Slave Lake and Peace River. He was able to return to the Fond du Lac mission every spring until 1858, when other priests succeeded him: Fathers Clut, Séguin, Eynard, and Faraud.²⁴ However, annual visits alone were insufficient to maintain the Indians' fervour, so Father Albert Pascal established a permanent domicile there in 1875, remaining until 1881. Living there was always very hard. The little log and mud hut — twenty-seven feet by seventeen — built by Father Grollier in 1855 had a chapel and residence, the former barely possessing room for a little altar, the celebrant, and two acolytes. The hut's walls were a mere six feet high, the roof covered with bark and mud, substances unable to keep out the rain or the melting snow.²⁵ Apart from the contact with the Indians — which, because of the migratory existence of the Caribou-Eaters, was rare — the incumbent at Fond du Lac could have his loneliness relieved only on his biannual excursions to the Nativity Mission for his spiritual retreats. Successors to Pascal at Fond du Lac were Fathers de Chambeuil (1881) and Gabriel Breynat (1892).

The Church of England had not been inactive all this while. Their missionaries made deep penetrations into the northwest slightly later than the Catholic Church's and do not figure immediately in the history of Fort

²⁴ Ibid., p. 170.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 171.

Chipewyan because the presence of the Catholics there induced them to head much further north.²⁶ The first Church of England missionary to visit the far north was Archdeacon James Hunter. In 1848 while at The Pas he received a plea from Indians in the Athabasca country asking that a teacher be sent among them; Hunter was able to respond to the call only in 1858. He spent a full year among the Indians at Fort Simpson, returning to the Red River in the autumn of 1859, after seeing the Reverend William West Kirkby established in a permanent mission station at Fort Simpson that soon included a church, St. David's.²⁷ Reverend Robert MacDonald followed Kirkby in 1862, going as far as Fort Yukon. When word reached England in 1865 that MacDonald was in failing health "and was obliged to leave his work, and that Romish priests were in readiness to succeed to it"²⁸ an appeal for an immediate replacement for him was made. The man who responded was William Carpenter Bompas who with the greatest alacrity immediately left England on 1 July, 1865, reached Fort Chipewyan on October 23 — "We were surprised yesterday at the arrival of a Protestant Missionary, a Mr. Bompas, from England on his way to the Youkon...."²⁹ and Fort Simpson on Christmas Day. The news of MacDonald's decline was fortunately premature, and as he was able to continue his work it fell upon Bompas to accept a "roving commission" to proselytize in the Athabasca district, on Peace River, and on Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes. Such frequent travel was necessary because the English missions were very

26 H.A. Cody, An Apostle of the North. Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, D.D., Toronto, The Musson Book Com. Limited (1908), p. 54.

27 Boon, p. 81.

28 William Carpenter Bompas, Diocese of Mackenzie River, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (1888), p. 28.

29 B.39/a/45.

understaffed. Bompas wrote the following in regard to the Athabasca District, but could have applied it to any of his other charges: "If I leave this district a second time unoccupied, the Indians will lose all confidence in the permanence and reliability of our instruction, and will be thrown more completely than ever into the arms of Rome."³⁰ It was in meeting the Roman threat that Bompas acquired his reputation as an indefatigable traveller.

Even though the Anglican missionaries had taken the far north as their domain — because the middle portion had been pioneered by the Catholics — Bompas gradually swung around to the conviction that there was a very real need for a mission station in Fort Chipewyan: it was a very important establishment of the English fur company whose officials gave him every encouragement to establish there, it had a large dependent native population, and it would provide a vital connecting link between Fort Simpson and the outside world.³¹ But Bompas was consecrated bishop of the Diocese of Athabasca in England on May 3, 1874 before he was able to realize his ambition. It was only on the return trip from England that he was able to ensconce a missionary there. The Fort Chipewyan mission's first incumbent was the Reverend Arthur Shaw and his wife.³² Chief Factor Roderick MacFarlane, acting on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, donated land for a small mission-house — it was fifteen feet by twelve feet — that was erected in

30 Quoted in Cody, p. 134.

31 Ibid., p. 65.

32 Boon, p. 212.

1876.³³ Construction on St. Paul's Church began in 1879; the structure was opened on Easter Day, 1880, and is still in use.

Once the missionaries of either church had had a chance to establish themselves in their new homes they were free to turn to the work that had brought them thither: catechizing, secular education, health care. It was only rarely and with some difficulty that the work could be carried on in the days before the Chipewyan and Cree in the area of the lake had taken to settling permanently about the fort. Before that development the Indians would be at the fort only on two occasions in the year: in the autumn to meet the incoming brigade and receive an outfit for the coming season, and in the spring to bring to the fort the result of the winter's hunt. Wrote Bompas³⁴: "They generally, in visiting the post, remain only a couple of nights, except in the spring time, when they often bring their families and tents, and remain encamped in the neighbourhood of the post for some weeks." The missionaries would have to make the most of this occasion and use it as an opportunity to teach and convert. The only time an Indian would visit a missionary at another time of year would be to have his children baptized, or to occasionally attend a Sunday service.³⁵ Otherwise it fell upon the missionary to himself become peripatetic if he were to remain in contact with his parishioners.

It was certainly not for any lack of fervour that the results of the Anglican Church's missionaries in providing schooling and health care to

33 See Reverend A.C. Garrioch, A Hatchet Mark in Duplicate, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1929), p.13.

34 Mackenzie Diocese, p.18.

35 S.A. Archer, A Heroine of the North. Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, (1929), p.90.

their charges was less spectacular than those of the Catholics. The Anglican missionaries worked sedulously at producing devotional works for the Indians in their own languages: Kirkby's book of hymns and prayers in Slavey was printed in New York in 1862, his translation into Chipewyan of the gospels of St. Mark and St. John was published a few years after Bompas' arrival in the region, and twenty years after Bompas' entry into the country the Anglican personnel in the region had printed a summary of Christian instruction in seven local Indian dialects, which, wrote Bompas, "even the Roman Catholic Indians tell us is better than the priests' books."³⁶ Their school instruction too was as good as they could make it. It was done at first on a fairly improvised basis, as Bishop Bompas' wife relates:

Just now we have a class of Indians in the afternoon, and I go in and make them sing and do calisthenic exercises. Before this I preside over an ablutionary department, and then send them outside with a comb by which their black shaggy manes are reduced to order.³⁷

The instruction later became more sophisticated as trained catechists and instructors were brought out; A.C. Garrioch had about a dozen children of fort personnel to instruct when he arrived in Fort Chipewyan in 1874.³⁸

36 See, Boon, "William West Kirkby, First Anglican Missionary to the Loucheux", The Beaver (Spring 1965), p. 38; Cody, pp. 79 and 223; Bompas' quotation probably refers to the books of devotion prepared for the Cree and Chipewyan at Lake Athabasca around 1856 by Bishop Taché and Father Faraud; the former was in Roman type and the latter in syllabic characters; see Morice, History of the Catholic Church in Canada, pp. 258-9, and 265.

37 Archer, p. 27.

38 Garrioch, pp. 11-12. Fred Fraser later recounted that sports played a prominent role in the schooling given the native children by the Anglicans: "Besides the training it helped to prepare us for the rigors of the north." "A Fur Trader of the North", Alberta Historical Review, vol. 4, no. 4 (Autumn 1956), p.21.

One of Bompas' first concerns was for the health of his native charges; while on his numerous travels he worked hard at vaccinating the Indians against smallpox.³⁹

While the Anglican missionaries' contribution to the care and education of the native peoples in their districts is thus seen to be considerable, it was nevertheless not as spectacular as the work done in those fields by the Catholic missionaries. Although there is hardly an early Catholic writer who would admit it, the reason for the stronger Catholic showing lies not in differences of commitment to Christ, but in the Catholic Church's unique organization. Priests who felt that a particular mission showed promise could call upon the aid of unordained brothers and nuns and build a very flourishing community. The brothers' function would be to provide the labour and skills to construct mission buildings and provide for the people who lived there, while the nuns would teach in those buildings and run infirmaries and orphanages, leaving the priests free to celebrate Mass and travel among the encampments where the Indians lived. It was this pattern that was followed at the Nativity Mission on Lake Athabasca where it worked as well as it did elsewhere.

Most of the brothers came from France; those who did were making a real sacrifice in that "most of them never dreamt then of the possibility of revisiting their native country."⁴⁰ Others came from Quebec and, rather surprisingly, a few from Fort Chipewyan itself: "Louis Lafrance left his Employment as Cook in the Kitchen and has gone over to serve at the

39 Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, p. 210.

40 Morice, The Catholic Church in the Canadian Northwest, p. 24.

Mission, expecting in time to be a Brother."⁴¹ Some served for short periods of time and then returned to the fort: "Louis [Paill?] has returned to the Fort after serving at the Mission since all winter."⁴²

The order of nuns most closely associated with the Canadian northwest is that of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, most often referred to as the Grey Nuns. The first nuns to become established in Fort Chipewyan did so in quite roundabout fashion. A group of them were travelling from Montreal to Fort Providence in 1867, and arrived with Bishop Faraud on 13 August, eliciting a somewhat incredulous comment in the post-journal "There appeared to be a good many females on board."⁴³ Theirs was to be a brief visit only for their destination was Fort Providence, but their arrival in Fort Chipewyan was happily timed to allow them to witness the consecration of the bishop who was to be instrumental in having some of their number transferred from Fort Providence to the Nativity Mission.

The scope of activities of the northern Catholic missionaries had grown to the extent that it was necessary to provide Bishop Faraud with an assistant, an auxiliary. Father Isidore Clut was chosen for the position. His consecration took place at Fort Chipewyan the day after Faraud and the nuns arrived. The novelty of the event was such as to bring the fort's officials to allow work to cease on account of it: "The men returned from the hay making this afternoon in order to be present at the ceremony of consecrating the new Bishop."⁴⁴ The nuns departed soon

41 6 April 1868, B. 39/a/46.

42 Loc. cit.

43 B. 39/a/45.

44 14 August 1867, B. 39/a/45.

after the conclusion of the ceremony and reached Fort Providence on the 28th of the month.

In the meantime the work of the mission on Lake Athabasca expanded to the extent that Bishop Clut early in 1874 deemed it absolutely necessary that a school with teaching nuns be established there, and, acting without their superior's knowledge — due to the poorness of the communication with the outside world — had two of the Fort Providence nuns transferred to the Nativity Mission. They arrived in late July, and within a week had cleared out a small house, named it the Holy Angels school, and begun teaching fifteen pupils. Surviving the first winter was very difficult; it was severely cold and provisions for the school consisted of one sack of flour, a small barrel of sugar, five barrels of wheat, seven or eight of barley, and some potatoes.⁴⁵ From this rather inauspicious beginning there was to emerge in later years a very extensive boarding school and orphanage, a home and hospital for the aged, and an infirmary.⁴⁶

Procuring food to support such an establishment devolved mainly upon the brothers and was no easy task. Fishing was of course the prime source of food, and involved the same problems, hazards, and yields as faced by the fishermen in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. The size of the Nativity Mission was such that about 30,000 fish had to be caught each autumn if serious hunger were to be averted. The securing of the autumn

⁴⁵ Duchaussois, The Grey Nuns, p. 148.

⁴⁶ In establishing boarding schools the Catholic missionaries were following the tenet of the earliest clergyman in the north, John West, the Anglican minister sent to the Red River Settlement by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1820. Writes Walsh (p. 249) "He was convinced that the only way to teach Christianity to the Indians was by removing them from their native environment into a boarding school and there to give them a general education in preparation for their understanding of Christian doctrine and practice."

catch was a very delicate operation requiring the smooth functioning of many seemingly disparate elements. Duchaussois has listed them:

quick discovery of the school or shoals of fish, continuous fine weather, such a medium depth of water as will let the nets be placed at a distance from the weeds, water free from blocks of ice; then a favourable wind for the boats when loaded, sand banks and rocks well covered, and finally a quick frost to aid in saving the fish for the long months to come. The absence of even one of these conditions may mean quite a serious misfortune for a large community.⁴⁷

Although the brothers endured the same hardships as the fishermen whose purpose in being on Lake Athabasca was the procuring of furs and not souls, the missionaries accepted the hardships in a much different light than did the fur traders:

Sometimes the cold is so intense that neither hands nor nets can be withdrawn from the water, and the fisherman must only plunge his hands the deeper, catching, if so be, one fish and another with bare hands beneath the ice. A certain Brother, who left France 60 years ago, never seeing it again, and who has been the great provider for the winters on Great Slave Lake, said one day, smiling through the icicles of his beard, and breaking off the glove of ice forming on his hands as soon as he took them from the water: "Don't you think, Father, one must have some little love of God to remain in a country like this?"⁴⁸

The branch of food gathering at the mission that enjoyed a success unique to the areas was the brothers' farm. It is thought that Father Faraud chose the rocky promontory overlooking a muskeg swamp because it would be easier to drain it than clear part of the neighbouring forest. Faraud, when still there alone, drained it himself. Sedulous application in its exploitation by himself and the brothers who succeeded him revealed over the course of years the techniques necessary for securing optimum

⁴⁷ Hidden Apostles, p. 175.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

yields from a very forbidding region. When the botanist John Macoun visited the region in 1875 he came away from the mission very impressed. His testimony before the Schultz Committee a dozen years later is indicative of his feelings at the time:

I passed down the Athabaska (from Fort Chippewyan) to the Mission, and I found growing on soil that would be of no value here whatever, sand and muck, an old swamp where they had planted wheat on May 5, and I found it in the stook on August 26, and brought away from it the grain that was awarded the bronze medal at Philadelphia, in 1876. It was forwarded to me, but I said that it did not belong to me, but to the missionaries at Athabaska.⁴⁹

Macoun's description of this award as "the bronze medal" may have led to the rosy conclusions fabricated by enthusiastic reporters which over the decades have often led to the statement that in 1876 at the International Exhibition in Philadelphia Fort Chipewyan carried off the top prize for wheat. A study of the prize list⁵⁰ clears up this misapprehension. It indicates that at this exhibition some silver medals and many bronze medals, of which this was one, were distributed for wheat. Perhaps the only significance we can attach to the sample of grain in question is that it was certainly a worthwhile specimen and, moreover, that it was by far the most northerly one on display. As any indication of the existence at Fort Chipewyan of a climate amenable to wheat growing or of the presence of

49 Ernest J. Chambers (ed), The Great Mackenzie Basin. Reports of the Select Committees of the Senate, Sessions 1887 and 1888, Ottawa, King's Printer (1908), p. 38. See also Macoun's "Geological and Topographical Notes on the Lower Peace and Athabasca Rivers", Canada, Geological Survey, Report of Progress for 1875-76, Ottawa, p. 165.

50 International Exhibition 1876, List of Awards to Canadian Exhibitors by the United States Centennial Commission. The present writer owes a great deal to Mr. N. B. Wainwright of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for his invaluable assistance in tracing the details of this award.

abundant arable soil, it can be ruled out. As an indication of the devotion, the perseverance, and the labours of the priests in their efforts to produce farinaceous food on the Pre-Cambrian shore of Lake Athabasca, however, a gold medal would perhaps have been little enough recognition.

It was probably this medal that so excited Father Emile Petitot's imagination when in 1879 he witnessed what must have been another of the many low water periods in the delta and stated that:

At that time, the channels of the Athabasca were almost dry; the main current had left the central one and gone wholly to the east, and the savanna of the estuary, elevated many feet above it, was changed into the immense and perfectly firm prairie, covered with young willow copses and dotted with water-holes. But the most remarkable thing was that the estuary of the Athabasca had entirely left this high and dry prairie, and betaken itself to a point between its old mouth and that of the Peace River, into the Rocky (or Stony) River, the drainer of the great lake. The expanse of waters between these two points had therefore vanished, and the once great bay of Lake Athabasca, so picturesque with its chains of granitic pine-clad isles, like a fleet of warships preparing for nautical evolutions, had wholly disappeared. Perhaps I should more correctly say that this basin of five to six leagues still existed with its rocky rim, but instead of water it contained grass.... This part of the lake was also transformed into a prairie, from Bustard Island to the Rocky River, and its former islands, now surrounded by fertile land, only lacking the plough to produce splendid crops....

Unless some extraordinary flood remodels this newly formed estuary, the Athabasca district will thus have gained an immense space of land, excellent for cultivation, and not requiring artificial fertilisation for very many years; and it should be noted that the climate of the lake is far from being an obstacle to the ripening of cereals and vegetables, for at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, the Catholic Mission near Fort Chipewyan obtained a silver [sic] medal and honourable mention for cereals of the first quality and remarkable size.⁵¹

51 "On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory", The Canadian Record of Science, vol. 1 (1884-1885), pp. 38-9.

His assertion that the lake was a prairie from Bustard Island to the Rocky River is difficult to believe. A search of the Hudson's Bay Company records, which at the time were kept by that assiduous correspondent and interested observer of natural phenomena, Roderick MacFarlane, fails to reveal any mention of such drastically reduced water levels. Moreover, none of the scientists of the Geological Survey of Canada, such as Robert Bell and George Dawson, who were studying the Athabasca River between 1880 and 1882, refer to low water levels. One is forced to the conclusion that the Bustard Island to which Father Petitot referred must have been a different one to that which now bears the name and that it must have been visible when looking west over the Rocher River.

While we now have some difficulty placing the correct interpretation on his remarks about a low stage of the water, we have none in recognizing the beneficent labours of the mission workers in growing grain. Arduous as was the task of procuring food for the northern missions, however, it is pointed out with pride that no one has starved at a mission.⁵² Nevertheless, it was to be a very long time before complete security in the matter of food supply was to be assured, as Father Gabriel Breynat tells us. Writing of Fond du Lac in the 1890's, he said that the annual rations for the mission posts were twenty-five pounds each of rice, dried grapes for altar wines, and dried apples.

Also there were six or seven pounds of butter, part of the produce of the little farm belonging to Nativity mission. In addition we had about a hundred pounds of sugar, out of which our personal ration, except when traveling or working outside, was four lumps a week. The rest had to be used to entice the caribou hunters and natives to provide us with the maximum amount of dried meat, fat and pemican. This meat and fat,

52 Mid Snow and Ice, p. 77.

beyond what we absolutely needed, went to the Brothers of the Nativity mission for use during their heavy labours outside the mission. Dried meat, fat and pemican would be served to the Fathers and Sisters on Sundays and feast days, and were a special reward for the school children on holidays.⁵³

The Church of England missionaries probably enjoyed more security in the matter of provisions, for theirs were normally purchased — "at pretty high prices" wrote Mrs. Bompas — from the Hudson's Bay Company on condition that the missionaries never trade in furs with the Indians.⁵⁴ However, not even under such conditions were the English clergy free of privations. One early traveller recounted that

Bishop R[eeve?] told me he stopped in the midst of service once to snatch up his gun, which was close by, and bring down a goose from a flock which was passing over. But he said he did it instinctively, and his wife and children were literally without food at the time.⁵⁵

Both groups of missionaries had also to depend upon the Hudson's Bay Company for another fundamental service, the transporting to their mission of supplies they needed. The Company's preferential stance toward the Church of England in this matter caused some resentment among the Catholics. Of the twelve barges the Company annually sent to its northern posts, one was set aside for conveying the Protestant and Catholic missionaries and their supplies — two-thirds of the available space was for the former, the remainder for the much larger Catholic settlements. "Of course, the Company regulated all questions of fare, and of the times for starting and

53 Bishop of the Winds, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1955, p. 18.

54 Archer, p. 26. The Catholics had occasionally to depend upon the Company's resources too, as revealed in the Fort Chipewyan Post-Journal entry for 16 May 1860, "Obliged to supply the Missions with fresh meat to keep the worthy people there alive." (B.39/a/44b.) The mission at Fond du Lac had to be given meat on three occasions in November and December 1855 (B.72/d/1).

55 Grace Lee Nute, "Paris to Peel's River in 1892", The Beaver (March 1948), p. 22.

stopping, and took no responsibility for the possible loss or damage of goods, or injury to person."⁵⁶

The Catholic missions' growth and their subsequent increased demand for supplies made change absolutely necessary. In 1855 it was decided that the Catholic mission at Lac La Biche "should be put on such a footing that, not only that post and the projected missions might profit by the local resources, but that a system of transportation thence to the north should be organized with a view to curtailing expenses and ensuring some measure of independence from the Hudson's Bay Company."⁵⁷ To test the efficacy of the projected move Bishop Taché in 1856 descended in a canoe the Lac La Biche River to the Athabasca and thence to Fort Chipewyan, thus being the first person to use this new transport route.⁵⁸ Not much progress was made in developing the system until Father Clut's consecration in 1867 as assistant to Bishop Faraud allowed the latter to concentrate upon the problem of devising a practicable transportation system for the missions. The transforming of the idea into reality involved the shipment of freight overland in winter from Fort Pitt on the Saskatchewan River to Lac La Biche. This stockpiling of goods at Lac La Biche was done in 1868 and 1869 with the goods forwarded in four-ton scows down the Lac La Biche River to the northern Missions in May of the latter year.⁵⁹ The timing of the new system's implementation was fortuitous in the extreme, for the Hudson's Bay

56 Mid Snow and Ice, p. 56.

57 Morice, History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, pp. 252-3.

58 J.G. MacGregor, The Land of Twelve-Foot Davis, Edmonton, Applied Art Products Ltd. (1952), p. 239; cf. also The Grey Nuns, p. 99n.

59 MacGregor, p. 241; S.C. Ellis, "Athabaska Trail", Canadian Geographical Journal (June 1939), p. 331.

Company's sale of its lands to the Canadian Government in 1869 deprived it of its monopoly rights to the fur trade in Rupert's Land and made the price of furs subject to increases. With the possibility of a rise in the price of furs it became necessary for the Company to cut down on other expenses. Governor MacTavish in 1868 wrote Bishop Faraud that he would have to make his own arrangements in the future for the carriage northward of mission goods — arrangements he had most fortunately already made.⁶⁰

Faraud's venture proved successful and the route was used for twenty years, with projected improvements always being kept in mind. In 1870 the Bishop began the construction of a 140-mile cart road from Lac La Biche to Fort McMurray to allow the scows to avoid the Athabasca rapids. It proved too expensive and too difficult a venture and had to be given up in favour of a road cut from the Lac La Biche River to the Athabasca. Stage two gave way to stage three in 1883 when the Hudson's Bay Company constructed a road from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing to facilitate the carriage of freight that had begun to be carried on the Saskatchewan in 1882 on steamboats.⁶¹ It is ironic that one of the last canoes taken over the missionary route consisted of the machinery for a steamboat to be operated by the Hudson's Bay Company. The missionary route ceased to be used in 1889 and all traffic — freight and passengers — came to use the Company's new route. Bishop Breynat records that in the 1890's two fifty-foot rectangular barges were sufficient to carry the missions' annual supplies northward from Athabasca Landing; the trip from Edmonton to Fort Chipewyan took nearly a month.⁶²

60 Mid Snow and Ice, p. 57.

61 MacGregor, p. 241; Mid Snow and Ice, pp. 61-2, and 137.

62 Breynat, pp. 8-10.

The next stage in the Catholic missions' transportation system deals with the small steamboats it came to operate on the Mackenzie waterways. Bishop Grouard in 1890 sent a steam sawmill to the Nativity Mission for use in cutting logs for the mission's first steamboat, the St. Joseph, completed in 1893.⁶³ It was used on the Athabasca River between the Grand Rapids and Fort Smith, but was far from being an entirely satisfactory craft:

The St. Joseph was no great success in its first season. When it tugged against a strong current, its cables would part; when it was stranded, its engine was not powerful enough to pull it off the sandbank. And the sandbanks never seemed so numerous as when the little steamer was trying to work.⁶⁴

A second steamboat for use below Fort Smith was ready for service in 1895; because its construction was made possible by contributions from the Redemptorist order the sixty-foot craft was named after Saint Alphonsus. It was operated for eleven years when in 1905 its career was ended in rather ignominious fashion: It was chopped up for firewood and its boiler put into a sawmill at Fort Resolution. Other boats replaced it and expanded the missions' transportation services to the Peace River.⁶⁵

As the complete story of transportation changes and later developments in Fort Chipewyan belongs to the next chapter, we might conclude the present one by briefly examining some of the early effects the missionaries had upon Fort Chipewyan and its environs. It is difficult to point to any immediate changes in the natives' way of life; we need to look not for

63 MacGregor, p. 244.

64 Hidden Apostles, p. 59.

65 Hidden Apostles, pp. 59-63; MacGregor, p. 244.

revolutionary changes but, rather, for evolutionary transmutations.⁶⁶ They first of all were able to solemnize the marriages between the whites and natives that had formerly been carried out "in the manner of the country."⁶⁷ A concomitant to the solemnizing of marriage was the gradual influence of the missionaries in abolishing polygamy and in improving the lot of Indian females in general, as Lefroy predicted some years before the arrival of the missionaries:⁶⁸

It is probable that a missionary would gradually get some of them into more settled habits. They have been remarkably brutal with their women. Missionary schools in which boys and girls are brought up together necessarily amend that. Of late years their intercourse with forts has considerably improved them in that respect.

Claims for the salutary alteration of the Indians' character under the influence of the missionaries are also made, but are of doubtful veracity:

The Chipewyans, without being as timid as their northern brethren, who deserved the uncomplimentary epithet of "Slaves" bestowed on them by the first explorers, are now a gentle, peaceful, and honest people, comparatively chaste and religious, though they may perhaps be accused of being a little too morose in disposition and fond of solitude.⁶⁹

While it is relatively easy to chronicle the effects the missionaries had upon the Indians it is much more difficult to determine whether their

66 In praising the missionaries we must not fail to note the beneficial effects of the Hudson's Bay Company's presence among the Indians; see Boon's article on Kirkby, p. 41.

67 See J.W. Chalmers, "Social Stratification of the Fur Trade", p. 19.

68 Stanley (ed), pp. 73 and 78; cf. also The Grey Nuns, p. 70 and Breynat, p. 80. Bompas' comment on changed habits makes us wonder if all changes were for the better (Mackenzie Diocese, p. 93): "Indians were formerly accustomed to have a private cup of their own, and would object to others, and especially to a woman, drinking from it; but this superstition is also dying out."

69 Petitot, p. 46.

work was ultimately beneficial to the people for whose sake they devoted their lives.

CHAPTER SIX

SOME MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION

While the missionaries were serving their charges in the Lake Athabasca area and building up their own transportation system, Canadian civilization gradually invaded the West and brought into being new transport routes and methods. That section of the voyageur's highway between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg ceased to be used following the union of the two fur-trading companies in 1821; when American railways reached St. Paul in 1860 the Hayes River route that had succeeded the canoe route became itself outdated as all goods bound for Fort Garry employed a progression of American railways, Red River carts, and boats. The old east-west canoe route was still used however for getting passengers, mail and express between the Athabasca country and Fort Garry, and between Fort Garry and Montreal. In fact, a very important step taken to ameliorate the labour involved in crossing the Methye portage came in the 1880's when wagons were employed to move the goods across the thirteen-mile barrier.¹

Another innovation designed to facilitate the transfer of goods in

1 E.W. Morse, "Voyageurs' Highway, The Geography and Logistics of the Canadian Fur Trade", Canadian Geographical Journal (May 1961), pp. 160-161.

the Lake Athabasca region came in the winter of 1881-1882, when a steamboat was constructed at Fort Chipewyan for use on the Athabasca River below Fort McMurray. The claim is made by William Carpenter Bompas' biographer A.C. Cody and repeated by a later Anglican Church Historian, T.C.B. Boon, that it was the Church of England personnel in the region of the lake who first conceived of using steamboats there. Cody recounts that Bishop Bompas' plans had called for a "steam-launch, with portable engines of about 20 horse-power, a rapidly revolving screw, and a furnace to burn wood or coal...."²

Bompas' plans were never realized, according to Boon, "as the Hudson's Bay Company, thinking that such a boat would cause the Company to lose prestige with the natives, took action on its own account."³ It is doubtful that the Anglican missionaries were the first to make active plans for the realization of steamboat service on the waterways contiguous to their Athabasca missions, for in 1876 Professor John Macoun recorded that when his exploratory party reached the Athabasca-Clearwater forks he learned from the man who in 1870 had established the Hudson's Bay Company's post there, Henry John Moberly, that he "had examined the channel of the Athabasca all the way to the lake, and found water enough in it, at its lowest stage, to float a steamboat drawing six feet."⁴ The issue is unimportant

2 An Apostle of the North. Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, D.D., Toronto, The Musson Book Co. Limited (1908), pp. 203-204.

3. The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies. A History of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land and Its Dioceses from 1820 to 1950, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1962), p. 214.

4. John Macoun, "Geological and Topographical Notes on the Lower Peace and Athabasca Rivers", Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress for 1875-76, Ottawa (1877), p. 171 of the Report.

but it does seem unlikely that the Hudson's Bay Company, when it had the foresight to make use of steam to begin shipping its freight along the Saskatchewan River in 1875, required a spur on the part of the missionaries to develop a means of expediting the transportation of their goods in a region that provided the Company with the bulk of its profits. It is likely too that the Company realized then a point made much later by a historian that the ongoing depletion of the buffalo herds that had previously provided the voracious fur brigades with their pemmican made imperative the adoption of new means of moving goods.⁵

Regardless of the source of the inspiration, a steamboat named after a Hudson's Bay Company Chief Commissioner J. Grahame⁶ was built for the Company over the winter of 1881-1882 at Fort Chipewyan by Captain J.M. Smith. It was certainly not a very imposing vessel: 135 feet long and 24 wide, it had a capacity of ninety tons and a speed upstream of 5½ miles per hour derived from 70-horse-power engines.⁷ The Grahame, however, did not need to be imposing; it had only to be able to handily navigate the waters between Grand Rapids on the Athabasca and Fort Chipewyan and provide an efficient substitute for the fur brigades on that portion of the Mackenzie drainage basin. Her first trip — from Fort Chipewyan to Smith's Landing—was made on June 15, 1883; the 120-mile trip downstream was made

5 Richard Glover, "York Boats", The Beaver (March 1949), p. 23.

6 H.A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, revised edition, Toronto, University of Toronto Press (1956), p. 371.

7 S.C. Ellis, "Portage la Loche", Canadian Geographical Journal (March 1936), p. 142, n.18; and James G. MacGregor, The Land of Twelve-Foot Davis (A History of the Peace River Country), Edmonton, Applied Art Products Ltd. (1952), p. 267.

in 7½ hours, the return in 15.⁸ The trust that the Company placed in the ability of such vessels to give good service in these waters was demonstrated in 1885 when the screw-propelled Wrigley was built at Fort Smith—by the same man who built the Grahame — for service beyond the sixteen-mile portage. The Wrigley was smaller than the Grahame — only ninety feet long and fourteen wide — but enjoyed the distinction of being the first steamer to serve between Fort Smith and the Arctic coast.⁹

Simultaneous developments of considerable importance to Fort Chipewyan were taking place much further south. In the same year that the Grahame made her maiden voyage the Canadian Pacific Railways reached Calgary. The Hudson's Bay Company, in order to take advantage of the new move, began to ship goods to the southern Alberta community and cart them overland to the Athabasca River. In 1884 the Company built a post at the new terminus for northward bound goods — Athabasca Landing, ninety miles north of Edmonton — and the development that put an end to the fur brigade and their old routes and that was to operate in unchanged fashion for over twenty years was firmly established. To make easier the ninety mile journey¹⁰ between Edmonton and Athabasca Landing the Company made improvements upon the original trail and by 1886 a road able to bear heavy freighting wagons was completed. Even so, the journey could take up to six days, and it was far from pleasant. One

8 MacGregor, p.267.

9 Ibid, p.277, and Innis, p.345.

10 When George M. Dawson was exploring the region he noted that "Edmonton is nearly due south of the Landing, at a distance of eighty-three miles in a straight line, or about ninety-six miles by odometer." "Report on an Exploration from Port Simpson...to Edmonton..., 1879", Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress, 1879-80, p. 86B.

writer recalled a time when "The mud was so deep that in places the horses could hardly move and the wheels went down to the axles."¹¹ Difficult as were the problems of using the road north from Edmonton, the importance of Athabasca Landing remained very high. It was a true gateway to the north: "Here trader and trapper could travel north-east into the Mackenzie River basin, via the Athabasca, or north-west to Lesser Slave Lake, then by eighty mile portage westward to the Peace River and north again."¹²

Making use of the Athabasca River above Fort McMurray for transport purposes demanded an expert knowledge of its nature. Using the river under the best of conditions was never easy; the difficulties were compounded by numerous navigational hazards that were capable of cropping up at any time. The free-trader Fred Fraser enumerated some of them:

Transporting freight up and down the Athabasca River entailed great risk to both man and property. The mid-summer high water brought driftwood which necessitated days of waiting for the river to clear. Protruding rocks and sand bars made navigation difficult in times of low water, while drifting ice in the spring and fall months, caused much delay to busy traders.¹³

In addition to the problems cited by Fraser there were the rapids to be considered. Travelling down the river in the first stage was deceptively easy; the first one hundred miles of river below Athabasca Landing was smooth flowing and allowed easy drifting both day and night. Nor was the first set of rapids very demanding, and once past them there was a further fifty miles of easy travelling. The boatmen then encountered the first really

11 Gordon Briggs, "Waterways", The Beaver (September 1939), p.29.

12 "Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Diocese of Athabaska, 1874-1949", The Church of England in Canada (1949), p.9.

13 Fred R. Fraser, as told to Alex E. Peterson, "A Fur Trader of the North", Alberta Historical Review, vol. 4, no. 4 (Autumn 1956), p. 19.

difficult and very hazardous obstruction, the Grand Rapids. At this point the river drops sixty feet in three-quarters of a mile, and so formidable was the obstacle that it was claimed to be unnavigable by craft "of any kind."¹⁴ The Grand Rapids prevented use of the river until about 1885 when an Athabasca boatman of uncommon courage and skill named Louis Faissonneuve — who was also known as "Captain Shott"—proved repeatedly that scows could safely be run through the eastern of the two channels formed by the Grand Rapids island. Once it was shown that the single greatest obstacle was surmountable the remaining rapids were not regarded seriously. This was so even though nearly a dozen rapids within the next eighty miles — caused by the river's dropping 360 feet in that distance — were encountered until Fort McMurray was reached. The river was then clear to Fort Chipewyan; indeed, the only serious obstacle to navigation between Fort McMurray and the Arctic coast is the fourteen-mile stretch of rapids at Fort Smith.¹⁵

The first vessels to use the route, and the methods, pioneered by Faissonneuve were scows. It would be difficult to imagine more inelegant or ungainly craft. They were flat-bottomed, built of planks caulked with tar, were about fifty feet long, eight feet wide at the bottom and twelve at the

14 R.G. McConnell, "Report on a Portion of the District of Athabasca", Geological Survey of Canada Annual Report, 1890-91, p. 230; it is surprising that McConnell should have reported an opinion once held, but which was completely out of date by 1891, as the following sentences indicate.

15 This paragraph is based upon two articles by Frederick J. Alcock, "Past and Present Trade Routes to the Canadian Northwest", The Geographical Review, vol. x., no. 2 (August 1920), especially pp. 80 and 82; and "Scow Brigade on the Athabaska", Canadian Geographical Journal, vol IV, no. 2 (February 1932), especially pp. 100, 101, and 104.

top, with a square bow and stern. About 2,000 feet of lumber were required to build a two-ton scow capable of carrying twenty-five tons of freight. The vessels were steered by a sweep thirty-five feet long balanced on a vertical iron rod at the stern of the craft. When it was necessary to supplement the strength of the current four oars twenty-two feet in length were employed. Over 120 scows were constructed each winter and sent downstream the following spring and summer to supply the northern forts. In 1898 the Klondikers took upwards of two hundred such craft down the river.¹⁶

Because steamboats were in use on the lower Athabasca after 1883 it was unnecessary for the scows to travel any further than Fort McMurray. There they suffered a fate quite unworthy of craft that had come through so many hazards; building material was scarce in the north and most scows were sold for lumber, the usual sum netted being \$10.¹⁷

The stretch of water at Grand Rapids has already been cited as the single most hazardous obstacle to use of the Athabasca River above Fort McMurray. It was overcome by a combination of the boatmen's skill and courage and the Hudson's Bay Company's ingenuity. Traffic was sent past the rapids only by unloading the scows at the upper end of Grand Rapids Island, running them down the eastern channel empty, and portaging the goods across the island to the waiting scows on the other end. The difficulties involved in moving large amounts of cargo across the island were lessened considerably when, in 1889, the Hudson's Bay Company laid a wooden tramway on the island

16 S.C. Ellis, "Athabaska Trail", Canadian Geographical Journal vol. XVIII, no. 6 (June 1939), p.332.

17 Descriptions of scows will be found in Alcock's "Scow Brigade on the Athabaska", p. 99; and Innis, p. 365. Richard Glover on p. 19 of his article on the York boats described a rectangular scow with upright sides.

and had the freight put onto a flatcar and dragged across by the boatmen. The one-half mile tramway was designed primarily for the Company's own use, but the fur-trading concern was not adverse to allowing others to use it — for a price of course. Anyone was welcome to do so if he could provide both the muscle-power to move the flatcar, and the \$2.50 per ton of freight, or \$2 per canoe, charged by the Company.¹⁸ The Grand Rapids Island railway was claimed to be one of the most profitable in the world for its length; it netted the Company some \$1,200 in 1913.

Taking freight downstream, however, was easy compared to bringing it up against the current. Until steamboats came into use it had to be towed by the boat crews. The craft used for fighting the goods upstream — and the goods were usually furs — were not the clumsy scows, but something called "sturgeon-heads". Sturgeon-heads were clinker-built, narrower than scows, and curved forward to a blunt bow. They were evidently more sturdily built — as any vessel moving against the current would have to be — for it was intended that they be used on repeated trips. Their shape made them easier to haul upstream than would have been the case with the scows, but the work involved in doing so was nevertheless difficult in the extreme. Charles Mair described the exceptionally difficult task as follows:

Nothing, indeed, can be imagined more arduous than this tracking up a swift river, against constant head winds in bad weather. Much of it is in the water, wading up "snies", or tortuous shallow channels, plunging into numberless creeks, clambering up slimy banks, creeping under or passing the line over fallen trees, wading out in the stream to round long spits of sand or boulders, floundering in gumbo slides, tripping, crawling, plunging, and, finally, tottering to the camping-place sweating like horses, and mud to the eyes — but never grumbling.

¹⁸ Alcock, "Scow Brigade on the Athabaska", pp. 100-101.

There was apparently some joy to be had from the experience:

After a whole day of this slavish work, no sooner was the bath taken, supper stowed, and pipes filled, than laughter began, and jokes and merriment ran around the camp-fires as if such things as mud and toil had never existed.¹⁹

The difficulty involved in moving against the current is illustrated by the time needed to make journeys in that direction. Fifteen to twenty-three days were normally required to track a boat from Fort McMurray to Athabasca Landing.²⁰ The free-trader Fred Fraser remembered that his organization could usually count on making two trips a year to Edmonton.²¹ Unencumbered crews did not fare much better. An entry in the Edmonton Bulletin for October 21, 1889, noted that the crews of the steamers Wrigley and Grahame took seventeen days to travel by flat boat and canoe from Fort Chipewyan to Athabasca Landing, and two more to make the overland journey to Edmonton.²² Difficult as their work remained, these latter-day voyageurs were spared having to awaken at 3 a.m., as was the lot of the first voyageurs; they were ordered to work with cries of "Ho leve! leve! leve!" at the slightly more agreeable hour of 4:30; the rest periods too were longer.²³ Nor did the earlier steamboats on the river fare much more impressively than did the tracking crews when it came to travelling against the current. A.C. Garrioch described a steamer journey from Fort Chipewyan

19 Through the Mackenzie Basin, Toronto, William Briggs (1908), p.40. Seven men were normally employed in tracking a twenty-foot boat, ten on a fifty-foot boat; MacGregor, p.269.

20 MacGregor, p.274.

21 Op.cit., p.19.

22 Cited by Louis Romanet in The Beaver (December 1929), p. 345.

23 Grace Lee Nute, "Down North in 1892", The Beaver (June 1948), p.45.

to Fort McMurray in the 1880's that took thirty-eight hours to go 184½ miles, at a rate of 5 m.p.h.²⁴ Steamers of course aided the scows whenever possible, but even then the linking of the two forms of transportation resulted only in a saving of labour and not of time. Alcock recounted that a small, wood-burning steamer towing a scow needed five days to travel from Fort Chipewyan to Fort McMurray.²⁵

Unimpressive as was the steamboat's performance by later standards, steamboats were nonetheless avidly sought after and sprang up everywhere possible on the rivers of the Mackenzie basin. Captain Smith who built the Grahame and the Wrigley next turned his attentions to the upper part of the river and in 1887, at Athabasca Landing, launched the stern-wheeler Athabasca for use down to Grand Rapids.²⁶

The improvements in northward-bound transportation that were pioneered by the Hudson's Bay Company were ironically enough the very means that enabled non-Company personnel interested in trading in furs to take advantage of the end of the Company's fur trade monopoly. The monopoly had come to an end in 1869 when the Company sold its land to the young confederation of British North American provinces, but it was some years before free-traders were able to take advantage to any appreciable extent of the opportunity then available to them. The mission route originating in Lac la Biche had been of some use, but it was only with the opening up by

24 A Hatchet Mark in Duplicate, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1929), pp. 177-178.

25 "Scow Brigade on the Athabasca", p.106.

26 George Bryce, The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company, London (1900), p. 395. The steamboats operated on the same river system by the missionaries were discussed in the preceding chapter.

the Hudson's Bay Company of the route originating in Athabasca Landing, (and, more specifically, with the emergence of private transportation companies operating on that route), and railway construction on the prairies that the free-trader came into his own. (The railway reached Edmonton in 1891.)

Free-traders operated in organizations of varying sizes. Fred Fraser's father Colin, the son of Sir George Simpson's famous piper, ran a very prosperous trading venture that centred about his family. The claim was made that this second Colin Fraser was the oldest and perhaps most successful of all the northern free-traders. He operated a string of trading posts in the Athabasca basin and moved his family to Fort Chipewyan in 1893.

Recounts his son Fred:

At the time of his death in 1941 we owned 20 buildings at Chipewyan. In earlier days we owned stores at McKay, Fitzgerald, Resolution, Rae, and Fond Du Lac.

The bales of furs the family brought down biannually to Edmonton were sometimes valued at over \$35,000.²⁷ Other organizations such as Brick Brothers, Revillon Frères Trading Company — incorporated at Ottawa in 1906²⁸ — and Lamson-Hubbard were much more broadly based than concerns such as the Frasers'. The latter company seems to have provided particularly stiff competition to the English concern. The company was rumoured to have 'several million dollars' " capital, and, in its dealings with the Indian

²⁷ Fraser, p.19.

²⁸ Innis, p.367.

and Metis of the region, used cash.²⁹ It was a move that traders such as Fraser deplored:

With the introduction of money unscrupulous traders would often take advantage of the uneducated natives. And with money came whiskey which was also used as a medium of exchange to the disadvantage of the Indian.³⁰

Other and perhaps less immediately harmful items appeared for trade on the free-traders' shelves:

High heeled shoes, low necked dresses, silk stockings, cosmetics and silk panties were all on sale at the new trading posts; and the Teamsters Ball and other social functions provided an excuse for wearing satin and velvet gowns, sequin-trimmed preferred.

The quick change from moccasin to high heeled shoe, causing strained muscles and aching feet, spoiled much of the physical enjoyment in these gala occasions, but that was greatly offset by the knowledge that one was fashionably attired.³¹

Regarding the free-trading companies Innis writes that "It is even contended in some quarters that the [Hudson's Bay] Company permits the existence of rival companies to stimulate the activities of the post managers."³² This may be true, but the English Company certainly fought very hard to eliminate its second generation of competitors. The Company's most potent weapon was its wealth. It was able to combat the free-traders with a price war that succeeded in keeping the less wealthy competitors at a

29 In this innovation, if Innis is correct, they were taking advantage of work done by the missionaries; writes the historian (p.362): "Education of the Indians at missions schools has prepared the way for the spread of the price system."

30 Op.cit., p.20.

31 G.J. Tranter, Link to the North, London, Hodder and Stoughton Limited (1946), p.156.

32 P. 357.

constant disadvantage. Lamson-Hubbard was soon forced to amalgamate with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company was not always successful, and the competition was not always without its unfortunate side effects. Philip H. Godsell wrote in 1934 that

The ensuing competition, with the high fur prices resulting from post-war inflation, gave such an impetus to trapping that the fur resources of the country have been depleted to a point where fur is scarcer now than within memory of living man, to the impoverishment of Indian and trader alike.³³

The new transportation system was of as much benefit to the world of science as it was to the free-trader. Readier access to the north enabled greater numbers of surveyors, cartographers, geologists, botanists, and zoologists to begin probing the secrets of the region much more easily than would have been the case had they had to depend upon the older and much more arduous voyageurs' highway.³⁴

An expansion of the network of Alberta railways now entered the picture and wrought drastic changes in the transportation routes to the northern regions. In 1912 the Canadian Northern Railway reached Arctic-flowing waters at Athabasca, by 1915 the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway descended the long hill to Peace River Landing, and,

33 "Old Trails to the Arctic", Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. VIII, no. 4 (April 1934), p. 155.

34 The introduction to Joseph Dewey Soper's "History, Range, and Home Life of the Northern Bison. (Wood Buffalo Park, Northern Alberta and District of Mackenzie, N.W.T. Canada)", in Ecological Monographs, vol. 11, no.4 (October 1941), pp. 347-412, contains an excellent survey of the travellers and scientists who preceded him in the region of the park, along with the results of their researches. Hugh M. Raup's Botanical Investigations in Wood Buffalo Park, Ottawa, The King's Printer (1935), National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 74, Biological Series, No. 20, provides the same sort of overview.

finally, in 1920 the Alberta Great Waterways Railway reached Waterways near the mouth of the Clearwater River at Fort McMurray.³⁵ With each of these advances of railroad steel the head of northbound navigation shifted. For a few years after 1915 Peace River town became the jumping off place and steamboats descended the mighty Peace as far as Vermilion Chutes. There their loads were transferred to other steamers waiting to carry them into the Slave River and thence to Smith's Landing above the unnavigable fourteen-mile stretch of rapids which ended at Fort Smith, or to carry them into Lake Athabasca in the other direction. For all practical purposes, Athabasca's usefulness in the northern transportation system came to an end, the Grand Rapids tramway became overgrown with grass, and the scows and steamboats ceased to ply the upper section of the waterway. In 1914, Colonel J.K. Cornwall, "Peace River Jim", ran his steamer Midnight Sun downstream past the Grand Rapids to Fort McMurray and renamed her the Northland Echo.³⁶ Other steamboats operating on the upper river did likewise. After the Alberta Great Waterways Railway reached Waterways and became the most important of the northward-thrusting railways, Waterways became the head of navigation, forcing steamboat routes to be re-oriented once again.

The extension of the railway to Peace River spurred the development of several transportation companies, the largest of which was the Hudson's Bay Company's Mackenzie River Transport. This branch of the Company's service dated back to the days of the Grahame and the Wrigley. Within a

35 Innis, p.345.

36 MacGregor, p.274.

few decades of the railway's extension to Peace River, and to Waterways in 1920,³⁷ the Mackenzie River Transport came to be operating on the Peace, Athabasca, Rocher, Slave, Mackenzie, Liard, and Nelson Rivers, on Athabasca and Great Slave Lakes, and along the Arctic Coast.³⁸ Some of the famous early steamers serving on the system were the Athabasca River, Northland Echo, Mackenzie River, and Distributor. Romantic as early vessels can be, we must not allow our sentiments regarding them to overwhelm us, as Archbishop Fleming of the Arctic reminds us:

Despite her renown the Distributor was simply a flat-bottomed wooden scow with two superimposed upper decks that looked very much like the verandahs of early Canadian and American houses. Stacked around the locomotive steam boiler were lengths of wood: the fuel for the furnace. Every eight hours during the entire journey we stopped to take on a new supply.³⁹

Nor could a great deal of romance be associated with the railway to Waterways, as Fleming recounted:

In those early days before plane travel, one had to go to the Western Arctic by rail from Edmonton to the end of steel at Waterways. The train bore the impressive name of the Northern Alberta Railway Arctic Express and it took twenty-three and one-half hours to cover 304 miles, an average of about 13¼ miles per hour. The two passenger cars were both so antiquated that by night they were lighted by coal-oil lamps that hung precariously from the ceiling.⁴⁰

The precarious state of the rail-bed was probably more important than the precarious state of the lamps:

The grade, however, was of a makeshift type and in places, after heavy rains, would disappear completely into the muskeg.

37 Innis, p.345.

38 H.N. Petty, "Mackenzie River Transport", The Beaver (March 1939), p.48.

39 Archibald Lang Fleming, Archibald the Arctic, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. (1956), p.283.

40 Ibid., p.282.

On one occasion it took us 19 days to come one way. (A person could have walked the distance in about the same time). For two days we were held up for lack of coal. To get rolling again both crew and passengers had to cut wood sufficient to last to the end of the journey. Derailment of the engine was quite common. Days would sometimes be lost in getting it back on the track with jacks, pries, and the limited tools carried for such purposes.⁴¹

Poor as the railroad to Waterways was, it was nevertheless of vital importance to Fort Chipewyan, for it eliminated forever the last vestiges of the community's role as a depot for the transshipment of goods along the northern waterways. The role of depot had been arrogated first to Athabasca Landing, then to Peace River Landing, and finally to Waterways, where it has remained. E.E. Rich described the new situation with these words:

The fevered re-sorting of the goods brought in by the brigades has given place to the ordered hurry at the railhead at Waterways with its warehouses, derricks, escalator and barges, to the fleet of lorries on the Fitzgerald Portage, and to the fleet of barges below Smith, on the Mackenzie. The river continues, but it flows past Chipewyan.⁴²

In Waterways, too, the famous Mickey Ryan, who was to play a vital pioneering role in assisting transportation to the North, conceived the idea of a horse-drawn winter mail and express service between the end of steel and Fort Smith. He started this service in January, 1922,⁴³ when the teams could travel on the ice, and from then on for many years they became a common sight in Fort Chipewyan. Then during the summer seasons he put his

41 Fraser, p.19. Another account of travel on the same railway in 1917 will be found in P. Duchaussois, The Grey Nuns in the Far North, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart (1919), pp. 191-3.

42 "Athabasca, 1938" The Beaver (December 1938), p.13.

43 G.J. Tranter, Link to the North, p. 183.

horses to work hauling loads across the Smith Portage. He went much further than that, however, and turned the old portage trail into a good highway. Once he had accomplished that he provided the natives of the Athabasca Delta and the Slave Lake regions with their first sight of passenger cars. By 1925 he had four cars running back and forth across the Smith Portage. He continued to operate his express service north from Fort McMurray until it was superseded by the use of aircraft.

Fort McMurray's unique location at the end of steel made the town of still greater importance when aircraft came to fly over the north in the Twenties. The first flight north from Edmonton was to Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River, in March, 1921,⁴⁴ and in 1929 C.H. Dickins of Western Canada Airways inaugurated what was to be a regular scheduled air service from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, Smith, Resolution, Hay River, Providence and Simpson.⁴⁵ By December of that year the claim could be made that "Flying has become a regular feature of life in the north country. Mail, express and freight are regularly carried by aeroplane."⁴⁶ Late in 1934 Canadian Airways inaugurated an air service to Fond du Lac. "In its fuselage were stuffed 10,000 first flight covers."⁴⁷ In air travel as in all transportation northward, "Waterways is the end of steel and

44 Guy H. Blanchet, "Conquering the Northern Air", The Beaver (March 1939), p. 11.

45 For a description of the inaugural flight see E.L. Myles, Airborne from Edmonton, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1959), pp. 120-123.

46 The Beaver (December 1929), p.345.

47 Myles, p.223.

McMurray the beginning of air travel."⁴⁸ Fort Chipewyan was being left to retreat farther and farther from the limelight that was once centred upon her. The once Great Emporium of the North and the hub of intersecting transportation routes settled down to the role of a has-been hamlet. Its rugged fort rebuilt so sturdily by Roderick MacFarlane in 1872 became merely another of a chain of fur trade posts to which the natives came to sell their furs. The days of its century-long glory were over.

Nevertheless, Fort Chipewyan saw sporadic bursts of activity during the years leading up to the arrival of the railway at Waterways. Its growing population of Metis found some work in connection with the increasingly busy steamboats. Until the end of the nineteenth century, however, as they had done in the past, the Indians — the Chipewyan and Cree — continued to earn their livelihood by trapping in the vast Peace-Athabasca delta or by catching foxes and finer furs in the forests or in the Pre-Cambrian lands, the home of the wandering caribou. Lake Athabasca provided them with fish for their own and their dogs' food; the adjacent forests and the delta lowlands supplied moose and buffalo for their own meat. Except for a small minority, few of the native peoples actually lived within sight of the walls of Fort Chipewyan. Twice a year, however, they came to the fort: in the winter to procure the equipment needed for the winter hunt, and in the spring to sell their furs.

In the spring of 1898 they obtained a fascinating new glimpse of the white man's eccentricities when some seven hundred northward-bound

⁴⁸ Lawrence J. Burpee, "Where Rail and Airway Meet", Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. X, no. 5 (May 1935), p. 239.

adventurers straggled across the lake in scores of boats on their way to the Klondike golfields.⁴⁹ In general, in their headlong rush, the excited horde of gold seekers travelling down the historic Athabasca-Mackenzie waterway as well as rushing along by a dozen overland routes radiating north out of Edmonton, had little regard for the rights or the feelings of the native people whom they encountered, and quickly antagonized them. "An outcry arose in consequence, which inevitably would have led to reprisals and bloodshed had not the government stepped in and forestalled further trouble by a prompt recognition of the natives' title."⁵⁰ The instrument by which further trouble was averted was known as Treaty Number 8, concluded in the summer of 1899 with the Beaver, Cree, Slavey, and Chipewyan Indians.⁵¹

The conclusion of this treaty, which contained essentially the same clauses as previous ones, made the Federal government directly responsible for the Indians' welfare and maintenance. While, as we shall see presently, it dealt with the question of education, its more immediate effect was to set up a reserve for the Chipewyan, but it was chosen and granted in 1940. The reserve included an area of some 125 square miles lying between Richardson Lake on the south and Lake Athabasca at its northern end. The Cree who signed the treaty in the Fort Chipewyan area were in no hurry to settle on a

49 J.G. MacGregor, The Klondike Rush Through Edmonton, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, p. 235.

50 Mair, 22; the author was the secretary of the half-breed Commission led by the Honourable David Liard.

51 The boundary limits of the Alberta treaties — 1876, 1877, and 1899 — are described on p. 3 of Hugh A. Dempsey's "The Indians of Alberta", Alberta Historical Review, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 1967), pp. 1-5.

reserve; at the present time negotiations are under way to create a reserve for them, but one has not yet been chosen.

The treaty party dealt with Indians at Smith Landing, Fort McMurray, Wapiscow and Fond du Lac, but the largest group signed at Fort Chipewyan. There, where the Chipewyan were led by Chief Alex Laviolette, and headman Julian Ratfat and S. Heezell, 407 of the tribe entered into the undertaking. The 183 Cree were led by Chief Justin Martin and headmen A. Tecarro and Thomas Gibbot. At Fond du Lac and Smith Landing, respectively, 379 and 283 additional Chipewyan came into the fold. It is of more than passing interest that Chief Laviolette unsuccessfully demanded as a condition of the cession of the tribe's lands the construction of a railway into his country.⁵²

Even without a railway the natives were to witness increasing white encroachment into their area and into their lives. White traders, who were of course determined to take some share of the exclusive trade formerly enjoyed by the Hudson's Bay Company, followed on the heels of the treaty party. Moreover, a year or so before the treaty was signed, the North West Mounted Police sent Inspector A.M. Jarvis on the first of its northern patrols which in 1897 reached Fort Resolution. Two years later the police established a detachment at Fort Chipewyan; it became the first official government agency to enter the life of the community. Moreover, once a year after 1899 the natives found themselves in contact with the faraway government when treaty parties, always escorted by the red-coated police, came in to deliver their annual treaty payments.

⁵² Mair, p.65.

The Mounties were also charged with the duty of enforcing the law passed in 1893 which forbade further destruction of the last remnant of the once numerous wood buffalo herds (Bison bison athabasca).⁵³ The Police intervention came at just the right moment for, according to various reliable estimates, between 1896 and 1900 the number of buffalo had fallen to about 250 animals. Fortunately, under the watchful eye of the police and the government game guardians, who in 1911 took over this duty from the police, the last herd of wild buffalo on the continent increased until Francis Harper estimated that in 1914 there were two herds totalling some five hundred animals.⁵⁴ By 1922 when by Dominion government Order-in-Council the Wood Buffalo National Park was established and a park warden appointed the number of buffalo was estimated to be between 1,500 and 2,000 animals.⁵⁵

Wood Buffalo National Park initially comprised a vast area extending north and west from the junction of the Peace and the Slave rivers. During the period 1925 to 1927, 6,673 plains bison were shipped from the park at Wainwright, Alberta. Many of them indicated a preference for the pasture on the meadows north of Lake Claire, with the result that the park boundary was extended farther south to include that area.⁵⁶ From then on the Park,

53 See J. Dewey Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life of the Northern Bison. (Wood Buffalo Park, Northern Alberta and District of Mackenzie, N.W.T. Canada)", Ecological Monographs, vol. 11, no. 4 (October 1941), pp. 347-412.

54 "The Athabaska-Great Slave Lake Expedition, 1914", Geological Survey of Canada, Summary Report, 1914, Ottawa, The King's Printer (1915), p.161.

55 Soper, pp. 350-354.

56 W.A. Fuller, Historical Review of Biological Resources of the Peace-Athabasca Delta, Depts. of Zoology and Botany, University of Alberta (1970), p. 10.

which is nearly the size of Nova Scotia, had an area of 17,300 square miles, of which 3,625 were in the Northwest Territories. The remainder is in Alberta and is bounded roughly by the Slave, Embarras, and Athabasca Rivers on the east, the 27th Base Line on the south, and, on the west, by the 5th Meridian for approximately a hundred miles. At the present time it is estimated that there are some 13,000 buffalo in the Park and on adjacent lands.

While watching the boats and barges bringing thousands of buffalo from the prairies to re-stock the Park, many of the residents of Fort Chipewyan recalled an earlier and rather pathetic government attempt to introduce reindeer into the north. Worries about decreases in the caribou herds in the Northwest Territories led the Federal Government in 1911 to purchase fifty domesticated reindeer from Dr. Grenfell in Labrador, who had imported a small breeding stock of them from northern Europe a few years previously. The animals purchased consisted of six four-year-old stags, four gelded stags trained as sled-deer, and forty three- to four-year-old breeding does. Arrangements were made through the Department of Marine and Fisheries for the transportation of the deer from St. Anthony, Newfoundland, to Quebec.⁵⁷ By the time the animals had reached Athabasca Landing nine of the fifty had died. Toward the end of September the remaining forty-one were loaded on four scows and sent down the Athabasca River. After many misadventures, and much to the amusement of the people at Fort Chipewyan, thirty-one animals remained alive to reach the vicinity of Fort Smith. By the spring of 1913 eleven reindeer were still alive; the last of them died in 1916.

57 Ralph Hedlin, "Reindeer for the North", The Beaver (Spring 1961), p. 48.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TRANSITION TO TODAY'S WORLD

Long before the introduction of reindeer had come to amuse the residents of Fort Chipewyan other white encroachment into the Lake Athabasca region had arrived in the persons of enthusiastic geologists, prospectors, and miners. The Geological Survey of Canada felt its way into the North by sending out various expeditions led by its famous geologists, including Robert Bell, R.G. McConnell, D.B. Dowling, J.B. Tyrrell, F.J. Alcock and Charles Camsell, who from 1880 to 1915 reported on the geology of the geography of the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca.¹

During 1915 Charles Camsell went to Fond du Lac to investigate mineral claims which were made by some prospectors sent out in 1912 by Lieutenant-Governor G.H.V. Bulyea of Alberta and by others during the ensuing three years. According to Camsell, 150 men came flocking into the area in 1915 seeking silver and associated ores.² Unfortunately none of them discovered any significant veins of ores.

1 See the Geological Survey of Canada's Reports of Progress, 1880 to 1884, 1890 to 1895, 1914 and 1915.

2 "Reported Occurrence of Silver in the Neighbourhood of Fond du Lac, Lake Athabaska, Saskatchewan", Geological Survey of Canada, Summary Report, 1915, Ottawa, The King's Printer (1916), p. 121.

About the same time, early in the First World War, a mysterious venture directed by a man named Dardier established a complete mining camp on Dardier's Island in Sucker Bay near Fond du Lac. The venture, reported to have found nickel, was said to have been well financed by British capital which sent in a steam operated power plant and did extensive exploratory trenching. In 1916, however, all work ceased, the crews disbanded, and the expensive machinery was left to rust away.³

Several years were to elapse while prospectors came and went looking for their fortunes all along the Pre-Cambrian shores of Lake Athabasca, but particularly in the area described by F.J. Alcock in the Geological Survey of Canada's 1917 Report "Black Bay and Beaverlodge Lake Areas, Saskatchewan." It was to be 1937, however, before the prospectors found a sufficient showing of gold to interest the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, which began developmental work on the Box Mine that went into production in 1939. Meanwhile, the hopeful town of Goldfields became incorporated in 1937 and by 1941, out of the thousand or so men in the near vicinity, had a population of 276. It was to become practically deserted when the mine closed in 1942. The miners moved on to Yellowknife.

Hopeful prospectors continued to pick at tempting outcrops however, and, following the discovery of pitchblende at Great Bear Lake, started searching with their geiger counters along the shore of Lake Athabasca and particularly in the Black Bay and Beaverlodge Lake areas. By 1949 Eldorado Mining and Refining (1944) Ltd. became interested. During 1952 the company started large-scale workings at its Ace Mine and by April 1953 its multi-

3 Erik Munsterhjelm, Fool's Gold, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited (1957), pp.292-94. The venture was a successful ploy on the part of a British munitions company to lower the price of nickel.

million dollar separation plant came into operation. Meanwhile the new town of Uranium City flashed into life. It got its start during the winter of 1952-1953 when all the abandoned buildings were moved a few miles from the now deserted town of Goldfields. Moreover, some twenty miles away Gunnar Gold Mines Ltd. made its monumental discovery of uranium ore which it worked by a vast open pit operation. Uranium City quickly grew to a population of some four thousand and weathered the ups and downs of the uranium market until it became what it is today: the headquarters of mining development on the north shore of Lake Athabasca. That the mines of the Beaverlodge area made a significant contribution to Canada's economy is evident from the fact that in 1958, for instance, they produced \$58 million worth of uranium.⁴

Naturally the existence of the mines, plants, and towns served to increase contact between the natives of the Lake Athabasca area and the white man's bustling civilization, as well as furnishing a modicum of work for the native people who came from Fort Chipewyan, Fond du Lac and Camself Portage. While mining activity was at its height the population of Fort Chipewyan reflected the availability of employment some one hundred miles east along the lakeshore. Census figures indicate that whereas in 1941 Fort Chipewyan's population was 705, it dropped to 453 by 1951, and to 304 in 1956. By that time it had reached its lowest ebb, from which it rebounded to 717 in 1961, 1,026 in 1966, and to some 1,500 at present.

Increased mining activity in Lake Athabasca's Beaverlodge area and in other areas much farther down the Mackenzie River System placed a heavy

4 A good introduction to the changing life of the region will be found in W.C. Wonders, "Economic Change in the Mackenzie Valley Area", Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. LXIII, no. 4 (October 1961), pp. 138-147.

strain on the transportation system carrying goods through or supplying Lake Athabasca. The port of Bushell came into being to serve Uranium City.

Employment there and on the boats and barges all contributed to the support of the people indigenous to the area.

During the period prior to the Thirties most of the traffic consisted of fur traders, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, government geologists, hydrographers, prospectors and missionaries.... In the early Thirties, however, interest in mining picked up with the discovery of radium on Great Bear Lake and gold at Yellowknife on Great Slave Lake and Goldfields on Lake Athabasca.⁵

According to W.B. Hunter, five companies operated in the waters north of Waterways: the Mackenzie River Transport (a division of the Hudson's Bay Company), the Northern Transportation Company, McLeod and Sons, McInnes Products, and Goldfield Transportation Company. After the outbreak of war in 1939, however, some mines were closed and tonnage moved along the waterway dropped. Then, in 1942, with the Americans' need to get oil to Alaska, the capped oil wells near Fort Norman began producing to capacity and the United States Army started construction of the Canol Pipeline from the wells to Alaska. Construction of this line laid such a heavy burden on the existing transportation companies that the U.S. Army itself constructed equipment and barges to handle much of its own needs. Except in the way of employment on various craft, all this increased activity had little effect on Fort Chipewyan. The community's role was mainly to watch the shipments pass by the channel in front of it.

In 1946, after the frantic Canol era of shipping had ended, interest in uranium soared to fever pitch and the tonnage shipped across Lake

5 I am indebted to Mr. W.B. Hunter of the Northern Transportation Company Limited for his invaluable assistance in supplying me with information for this section.

Athabasca reached another peak. By that time the Northern Transportation Company Limited had been taken over by the Dominion government, incorporated under a federal charter and become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Eldorado Mining and Refining Limited, itself a crown corporation. It had also become the only common carrier operating on the long waterway starting at Fort McMurray's door. But both the water transportation company and the mines found their operations subject to competitive forces and to major swings in demand.

By 1945 a crude road whose primary purpose was to transport fish had been bulldozed through some three hundred miles of forest northward from Manning, Alberta, to the south shore of Great Slave Lake at Hay River. By 1949 it was completed, and under the name "Mackenzie Highway" started to serve the North. The year 1960 saw it extended 281 more miles to Yellowknife. That same year the mines on Great Bear Lake and on Lake Athabasca closed down. The new highway and the uncertain future of the uranium mines had a drastic effect on boat and barge traffic on the long-established waterway. Then, in 1965, contributing further to the waterway's decline, the Great Slave Lake Railway was completed to haul out the ore of the rich mining operations at Pine Point and to reach the shore of the large lake at Hay River. From then on, except for local traffic to and from Lake Athabasca, little business was left for the boats and barges to handle between Waterways and the portage which ended at Fort Smith. That portion of the old waterway down to Great Slave Lake also fell into relative disuse.

As hinted at in the preceding chapter, navigation on the Athabasca River and particularly on Lake Athabasca, which as an inland lake might be thought of as a placid waterway, was by no means all clear sailing. Over

the years storms lashed the long lake and took their toll of lost lives and sunken barges. The worst tragedy whipped up by the stormy winds occurred in 1956, when, on her way to Crackingstone Point on August 26, the Northern Transportation Company's Clearwater sank in 135 feet of water, carrying her crew of eight to their deaths. The Clearwater was subsequently salvaged.

Of the several transportation companies which had operated across Lake Athabasca, the McInnes firm was one which had a second string to its bow. That company had been formed primarily to exploit another of the resources of the huge northern lakes — fish. While for a century fishing had provided much of the sustenance of Fort Chipewyan's population, it was not until 1926 that commercial fishing for export began on Lake Athabasca.⁶ From then on it continued "more or less without interruption until the present day."

Fishing operations start in the Athabasca Delta as soon as the ice leaves the shallow western portion of the lake, when warm-water, spring spawning species such as pike and pickerel are sought. The fisheries on the Delta and on the deeper or eastern end of the lake afford some employment to the residents of Fort Chipewyan throughout the summer. According to Wonders, around 1960 it provided work for about forty men and yielded an annual catch of over one million pounds. For some time after 1948 Lake Claire in the western part of the Delta developed a specialty fishing of local importance based on goldeye.

For many reasons, commercial fishing in Lake Athabasca as a whole, and particularly on the Alberta portion of the lake, has not been a healthy

6 This portion is based upon W.A. Fuller's Historical Review of Biological Resources of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. Depts. of Zoology and Botany, University of Alberta (1970).

industry; larger quantities of better fish occur in the eastern end of the lake, whitefish have been infested with worms, and pike do not command an adequate price, with the result that during eight of the years since 1943 commercial fishing was more or less dormant. McInnes Products had been predominant in the fishing industry in the area, but with a discouraging lack of success various other organizations have tried their hand in the business, including the Canadian Fish Company and the natives' Athabasca Fish Cooperative based at Fort Chipewyan. Very few, if any, Fort Chipewyan residents find employment in the Saskatchewan fisheries at the east end of the lake, which are naturally staffed by men from the Fond du Lac area and even by some men from Manitoba. Beginning about 1960 the commercial importance of fishing to Fort Chipewyan declined, until by 1971 it had reached the point where little but confusion and cloudy prospects faced the industry.

One interesting sidelight on the fishing industry involved the use of aircraft to transport the fish part of the way to their market. One of Canada's famous bush pilots, Grant McConachie, who combined enterprise with great financial ability, began his career in 1935 when with his Fort tri-motor airplane he began flying fish from Lake Athabasca to the end of steel at Fort McMurray.

It was a reflection of changing times in the north. Another symbol of Fort Chipewyan's falling prestige came in 1940 when all but one or two of the Hudson's Bay Company's old buildings, which in 1872 Chief Factor Roderick MacFarlane had reconstructed so sturdily, were torn down and the site abandoned. The buildings which were spared were moved to new locations in the hamlet.

Changes in the patterns of transportation relating to Fort Chipewyan had an almost revolutionary effect upon the community's prosperity; equally crucial were the social changes that occurred simultaneously to the economic transformation. People vital to the social life of the region were the missionaries, and their connection with education and health care put them in the centre of the profound changes that took place in the community over the course of the present century.

The extent of the missionaries' every-increasing involvement in the life of the region about Lake Athabasca is indicated by the growing maturity in ecclesiastical organization of the two missionary churches in the region. The Roman Catholic Church in the area ceased to have the status of a mission outpost when in 1862 Father Joseph Faraud was consecrated the first Bishop of Athabasca-Mackenzie — the activities of the Church had grown to the extent that they could no longer be effectively administered from St. Boniface, the former seat of all Rupert's Land. The details of Father Isidore Clut's consecration in 1867 as Bishop of Erindel and Coadjutor in Athabasca-Mackenzie for Bishop Faraud were discussed in an earlier chapter. Bishop Faraud died in 1890 and on August 1, 1891 Father Grouard was consecrated Bishop of Athabasca-Mackenzie in his place. By 1901 it was necessary to make another administrative change and the diocese was split into two parts: Bishop Grouard was given the diocese of Athabasca and Father Gabriel Breynat was consecrated Bishop of Mackenzie.

The activities of the missionaries of the Church of England had grown to the extent that their territory had perforce to assume a more mature status than that of a mission station and in 1874 the Reverend William Carpenter Bompas was consecrated Bishop of Athabasca. His headquarters were first in Fort Simpson, and shortly afterwards in Fort

Chipewyan. In 1883 the Anglican Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land rearranged the diocesan boundaries to correspond to the map of Canada drawn by the civil authorities earlier that year,⁷ and in 1884 the Reverend Richard Young was consecrated Bishop of Athabasca. (He moved the diocesan headquarters to Athabasca Landing in the same year in order to be at the new focal point of access to points within his diocese.) Over the course of the next several decades the adherents to the Anglican faith living about Lake Athabasca were shunted about and put under the jurisdiction of a number of different dioceses. The tangle was sorted out in 1933 when the diocese of the Arctic was created and Fort Chipewyan and its environs included within it. Archibald Fleming was its first bishop; the second and present bishop is D. B. Marsh.⁸

The growing maturity of the church bodies about Lake Athabasca has been examined not only for its antiquarian value, but because the developments whose highlights were cited above are indicative of the growing role the missionaries played in the life of the community. The missionaries' primary interest, apart from matters religious, lay in education, which was itself religiously oriented. The goal of missionary education is probably very succinctly set forth in the sentence, "All schools were operated on the same plan of giving the children a working

7 T.C.B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, Toronto, The Ryerson Press (1962), p. 101.

8 Some of this century's incumbents in the Church of England parish of St. Paul at Fort Chipewyan are listed in Boon, p. 236; the present incumbent is Reverend Bernard Osborne.

knowledge of western civilization and above all a personal knowledge of Christ."⁹ The Church of England missionaries set about implementing their goal by means of day school classes held on those occasions when the Indians would come into the settlements to worship. The Catholic missionaries would do the same, but with the arrival at the Nativity Mission of the Grey Nuns in 1874, were able to maintain a boarding school for orphaned and abandoned children who soon came to number one hundred.

Conditions began to change after the Treaty of 1899 came into effect and brought with it a paternalism that has not unreasonably been termed excessive. Under the terms of the treaty the government controlled the Indians' land, education, medical assistance, and rights.¹⁰ The portion of the treaty dealing with the Indians' education stated that: "Her Majesty agrees to pay the salaries of such teachers to instruct the children of said Indians as to Her Majesty's Government of Canada may seem advisable."¹¹ It was to be some little while before the exact letter of the clause was carried out. In the meantime the government contented itself with increasing the payments it made to the missionaries for carrying on the task of bringing education to the natives. This, however, was not much of an improvement, as Bishop Grouard pointed out in 1905 regarding his position in Athabasca:

There are 312 children in our schools. The Government pays for 100, and pays us here only at the same rate as the schools far to the south of us or in Manitoba. Still, we are grateful for

9 "Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Diocese of Athabaska, 1874-1949", The Church of England in Canada (1949), p. 12.

10 William D. Knill, "Schools in the Wilderness", On the Edge of the Shield, Fort Chipewyan and its Hinterland, ed. John W. Chalmers, University of Alberta Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, Occasional Publication Number 7, Edmonton (1971), pp. 30-38; see especially p. 31.

11 Mair, p. 474; for the full text of the treaty see ibid. pp. 471-475.

the Government grant, without which the three newest convents could never have been founded.¹²

The Metis' treatment was quite different from that of their cousins the Indians. First of all it was possible for them to elect whether they would choose to be called Indians, and thus come under the provisions of the treaty, or to be considered as being in the white man's camp. If they threw in their lot with the Indians, their claim to land would be satisfied by their portions being added to those of the Cree or Chipewyan whenever the band came to choose a reserve. Each Metis who chose to regard himself as a white man was given scrip allowing him to claim at least 160 acres of land. Unfortunately, they wanted the scrip to be negotiable, and, in spite of the commissioners' and even the Reverend Father Lacombe's efforts to persuade them otherwise, insisted on the point. As Mair said: "One thing was plain, they had made up their minds. Under the circumstances it was impossible to gainsay their assertion that they were the best judges of their own needs."¹³ As a result, and with scarcely a single exception, they immediately turned around and sold their scrip for a pittance.

In this and other respects the Metis were not treated so paternalistically as the Indians. For instance, because they had no reservations, no funds were allocated to the mission schools on behalf of their children. When the Province of Alberta was created in 1905, the Alberta School Act took no specific notice of the young Metis because compulsory schooling related only to organized school districts — and in the regions favoured by the Metis there were very few such districts.

12 Quoted in Pierre Duchaussois, Mid Snow and Ice; The Apostles of the Far North, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd. (1923), p. 73.

13 Op. cit., p. 68.

In consequence, by 1935 eighty percent of Alberta Metis under twenty-one were without any education. The Half-Breed Commission established by provincial Order-in-Council in 1934 concluded that it would be too expensive and complicated to give the Metis the status of treaty Indians — a step that was thought would destroy the Metis' sense of responsibility and prevent them from ever becoming self-supporting — and recommended that farm colonies be set aside for Metis only. Regarding education, the Commission recommended the construction on their new lands of day schools to encourage wives and families to remain in the colonies. In these schools the children were to be given the three R's, youths taught stock raising and farming, and girls "the elements" of sanitation, cleanliness, sewing, and knitting. The two Acts that were the result of the Commission's recommendations — The Metis Population Betterment Act of 22 November, 1938, and the 1942 Metis Betterment Act — were the instruments by which Metis education was secularized.¹⁴

The process of secularizing Indian education in Fort Chipewyan began in 1954 when the Department of Indian Affairs built a school there. The changing of educational authority resulted in the Holy Angels' boarding school of one hundred students becoming a residence only. In 1961 the Northland School Division was established; "by September 1963 some thirty isolated provincial schools had been welded into a single administrative

¹⁴ This account of Metis education has closely followed Knill's; see especially pp. 34, 35, and 37.

system known as the Northland School Division."¹⁵ An overlapping development occurred under the auspices of the Department of Indian Affairs when in March 1963 a vocational wing that had been added to their school was officially opened and the school renamed the Bishop Piché School.¹⁶

The publication commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the diocese of Athabasca presents a most ebullient analysis of the effects of mission schools:

The blessings of these schools is [sic] beyond human reckoning.... There is a poise and dignity, a sense of self-respect and nobleness among the native people that have attended our Schools or who have been under the influence of our missions for two or three generations, that is not found with the others.¹⁷

There are grounds for believing that the above description may be true insofar as mission schooling is concerned; others feel that the general trend emerging from the coming to the Indians of compulsory and secular education has been a disruption on the profoundest scale of the Indians' way of life. Communities had of necessity to develop near the schools¹⁸ and wives and children to remain there over the school term when they would otherwise have been on the trapline with the breadwinner,

15 J.W. Chalmers, "New Schools in the Forest", The Beaver (Spring 1964), p. 50. Knill (p.37) writes that the new system also took over the administration of the Metis colony schools "at about this same time." For an account of the establishment of the Northland School Division in Fort Chipewyan see Leslie R. Gue, "A Town in Transition", On the Edge of the Shield, ed. Chalmers, pp. 41-45; the author was the school division's superintendent beginning in June 1961.

16 Gue, p.44. The Most Reverend Paul Piché, O.M.I., D.D., is the present Bishop of the diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

17 Op. cit., p. 13.

18 An example of the urbanization under discussion occurred in 1968 when all the families of Sweetgrass Landing moved to Fort Chipewyan.

assisting in relieving the labour and loneliness of the trappers' lives. The trapper who gave up the struggle against loneliness and came to live in the community with his family had to travel much greater distances in order to tend his trapline. Many simply gave up trapping under those circumstances and came to depend on welfare. And the children who persevered in the schools found upon emerging from them that they were unfitted for performing the traditional tasks needed to ensure survival in the northern bush. For many of them too the only alternative was reliance on welfare. Others who leave Fort Chipewyan in search of employment invariably return to the community they conceive of as home, and then have no recourse but to turn to welfare.

And yet if Fort Chipewyan's former reason for existence had nearly vanished, and if its people were having difficulty following the path leading into the white man's frenetic world, nevertheless increasing numbers of them were nibbling at employment in that world. Aside from schools, various government offices have come to be established in the old community and have added their quota of modern buildings and their coterie of white folk. To some extent in many of these fields, natives, and particularly the Metis, found their services needed. Moreover, not far from the hamlet as distances go in Alberta's North, timber operations along the Peace River in Wood Buffalo National Park began in 1951 when Eldorado Mining and Refining Company established a sawmill. Other mills followed: Swanson Lumber Company of Edmonton in 1955, Denny Logging (whose mill was at Fitzgerald) in 1957, and the Park Lumber Company. By 1961, due to fires or failure, only Swanson Lumber Company remained in business; its most important site was at Sweetgrass Landing where its annual output approached fifteen million board feet. Several of its

non-supervisory logging and milling personnel called Fort Chipewyan their home.

At the same time that these mills were providing a fresh outlook upon employment possibilities in the white man's world, another long-time link with the past was severed when, in 1958, the Hudson's Bay Company's fleet of steamers gave way before the march of modern transportation services into the North and abandoned operations. The fleet had been the modern version of the Hudson's Bay Company's transport system which had seen over 135 years of continuous service in the region.

And yet as one tie with the past was being snapped, another nostalgic link was resurrected and refurbished. According to Dr. Wonders¹⁹ "The opening up in 1959 of a unique and hitherto long vanished hunting experience — for buffalo — in the Slave River area, is providing a further attraction for sportsmen." Once more as of old the natives outfitted and served as guides to white men who flew in to enjoy one of the rarest of sporting thrills — hunting buffalo.

While the residents of Fort Chipewyan were watching the re-establishment on a very limited scale of the buffalo hunting of former years they found themselves being swept rapidly out of those years by the introduction of many modern facilities. Central station electricity, then provided by Canadian Utilities Limited (now Alberta Power) became available in Fort Chipewyan in 1959 and made changes in their domestic lives. So did the introduction of dial telephones about two years later, which made possible instant communication with the outside world.

¹⁹ Wonders, op. cit., p. 25.

In due course but also very recently a number of federal offices became established in Fort Chipewyan to take their places beside the long resident Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The new offices included those of the post office and the Department of Indian Affairs, the National Parks Service, the Department of Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Transport. Similarly, the Provincial Department of Lands and Forests is represented by a forestry station. Moreover, in 1962 the forestry staff started cutting out a landing strip for its small aircraft. Two years later, under the auspices of Alberta's Northern Development Council, the difficult task of constructing an airfield capable of serving large planes commenced; June 18, 1965 saw the official opening of Fort Chipewyan's public airport. It is staffed by the Ministry of Transport. Since then regular wheeled air service has been provided on a scheduled basis.

Provincial government coffers, through the Department of Municipal Affairs, have also been called upon to install waterworks in the hamlet, and the bulk of the construction was completed in 1970. Within the last three years or so the government has also expended considerable money in grading and gravelling the mile-long street and its many subsidiary thoroughfares. At the same time, several modest new homes were constructed along these streets with funds made available by the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Department of Indian Affairs with the aim of improving the living conditions of Metis and Indians. Furthermore, the Metis Association of Alberta has recently reached an agreement with the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and proposes to start building more homes.

The provision of such services and buildings has provided considerable employment for the local population. In addition to it is the employment provided upwards of forty residents by commercial services,

services that include a restaurant, two pool halls, a movie theatre, oil and gasoline outlets, two garages, a taxi company, two motels, two retail stores, and a construction company. Unfortunately, but perhaps of necessity, few of the better paid jobs are filled with indigenous people. Some work in the field of mining is available south of Lake Athabasca, but it is situated well into Saskatchewan where Mokta (Canada) Limited, an organization backed by the French government, is currently spending some \$3,000,000 on its uranium property. It is unfortunate too that, even though the two major mining enterprises of the region, Eldorado Nuclear Limited at Uranium City, and Great Canadian Oil Sands at Fort McMurray, each employed several men from the Fort Chipewyan area, few of them stayed with these jobs, preferring the home environment and the limited chances of employment in Fort Chipewyan to the more rigorous demands of steady work in a white-dominated milieu.

Once back in their familiar environment they resumed a regimen in which they provided some of their subsistence by fishing for their own consumption and by hunting game, particularly moose. But during the last twenty years the increased population of Fort Chipewyan has intensified the hunting pressure on the big game animals, so that the local people can place less dependence on game with the result that it contributes ever lessening percentages of their subsistence.

Throughout Fort Chipewyan's long existence, however, trapping, and particularly muskrat trapping, has been the mainstay of its economy. While beaver, mink, and other rarer furs continue to add their share to the trappers' livelihood, muskrat have always supplied about seventy-five percent of the earnings of active trappers, which, at present, number roughly 150 people. Over the generations the Peace-Athabasca Delta has

been Canada's best muskrat haven. Although in some years the muskrat crop has been a relative failure due to disease or unusual water conditions, it has nevertheless always been the main support of the people in Fort Chipewyan.

During recent years, however, shadows have beclouded the fortunes of the men who follow the wild fur traplines; the fur farmers, synthetic substitutes, and falling prices have all damaged the northern fur trade. In Canada during the period 1948 to 1967, in spite of a drastic inflationary drop in the value of the dollar, the share of the market falling to wild furs decreased from approximately \$20,000,000 annually to \$12,000,000.²⁰ But an additional shadow, one falling some 700 river miles away, has been blamed for adding to the depressed conditions in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. That shadow is the great Bennett Dam in British Columbia.

The Bennett Dam, 615 feet high and one and one-third miles long, is one of the world's greatest man-made structures; it impounds water in a reservoir having a surface area of 950 square miles. Work on it began early in 1957 when the Werner-Gren B.C. Development Company Limited carried out damsite and other engineering investigations. By December 1959 it had submitted a comprehensive report to the British Columbia Comptroller of Water Rights. Somewhat later the Province of British Columbia decided to build the dam and power plant as a government venture. In 1961 construction of the necessary works commenced, and on September 12, 1967, the dam was completed and shortly thereafter dedicated by Premier W.A.C. Bennett, after whom it was named. By October 1968 the machines had been installed in the power house, and the plant, which was to have an ultimate

20 The Canada Year Book, 1969, p. 586.

capacity of some 2,300,000 kilowatts, began producing power which was sent over a 574-mile, 500,000 volt transmission line to Vancouver. The power was to serve hundreds of thousands of homes in British Columbia and the northwestern United States. Retention of the water to fill the huge lake behind the dam started somewhat earlier; even so the reservoir will not be completely full for another year.²¹

It was the retention of water which cast the shadow over the Fort Chipewyan trappers' prospects. Beginning then the dam held back the Peace River's usual spring runoff, the principal components of the annual flooding on the Peace-Athabasca Delta that replenishes such lakes as Mamawi and Claire, and raises their water levels. Once the dam prevented this annual flooding the level of these lakes dropped, and they entered the winter at such a low stage that at times they froze to the bottom, with predictable effects on the fish and muskrat of the region. While in recent years, as R.M. Bennett, an engineer of the Federal Inland Waters Branch, pointed out, a portion of the current drop in water level "is due to below normal runoff in the Athabasca and lower Peace River tributaries", he nevertheless concluded that: "From the available water level data, it is safe to conclude that operation of Bennett Dam since December, 1967, has definitely reduced Athabasca Lake levels for the years 1968 to 1970."²²

The effect of diminished water levels is undoubtedly reflected in the average catch of muskrat. Some figures giving the estimated muskrat production of the Athabasca Delta area of Wood Buffalo National Park

21 Most of the information for this paragraph came from issues of the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority's Progress, beginning with the 1957 number.

22 R.M. Bennett, Lake Athabasca Water Levels 1930-1970, published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, p. 41.

indicate that for the six years before 1967 the average number of pelts sold per year was some 69,000, whereas during the three years since then the average has been approximately 38,000.²³ The phenomenal catch of the 1965-1966 season tends to make this comparison too drastic, but in any event it appears that the muskrat yield has dropped at least thirty percent from what it once had been.

The dam and its effects however have not been the sole reason for the decline in fur returns. Other reasons include decreasing fur prices, the increasing urbanization of Fort Chipewyan, compulsory formal education, and the availability of social assistance, all of which not unexpectedly bring about a disinclination to earn a living from trapping.

Even when viewed from the standpoint of Fort Chipewyan's growing population and its increasing reliance on welfare, perhaps the effect of the Bennett Dam has not been all bad. After all, it has led to a public demand for an objective assessment of the problems faced by the sturdy indigenous population of the region — an assessment which at the moment is the most recent item in the long chain of events coming in the wake of the white man's arrival almost exactly 200 years ago, when Samuel Hearne, guided by his Chipewyan friends, ascended the Slave River to within about a day's march of Fort Chipewyan. The assessment in question is the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. The Project has avoided both the clamouring of partially informed publicity-seeking extremists and the silence of those who would look the other way and ignore Fort Chipewyan's problems by

23 From a survey carried out by G. Lyster of Wood Buffalo National Park, and E. Schaber of the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests.

conducting a scrupulously objective study of the facts. The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project is composed of specialists who are familiar with the problems facing a fine people and who are determined to seek out and recommend solutions to those problems.

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SECTION B

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY

OF

FORT CHIPEWYAN, THE PEACE ATHABASCA DELTA

AND THE LAKE ATHABASCA REGION

DECEMBER, 1971.

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January 11th, 1972.

Mr. D. Hornby,
Director,
Peace-Athabasca Delta Project,
512 Baker Centre,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Hornby:

We are pleased to enclose our report entitled "A Socio-Economic Study of Fort Chipewyan, the Peace-Athabasca Delta and the Lake Athabasca Region".

Excellent co-operation was extended to us by all those involved in the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project, as well as by the many government departments and agencies and private companies contacted during the course of our work. This co-operation has been appreciated.

The broad mandate with which you provided us in the original terms of reference for this study enabled us to direct our efforts toward what we believe to be the most potentially productive possibilities for the people of the area, both now and in the future. The opportunity to conduct a study of this nature under such a mandate has been very much appreciated.

The relationship of man to his environment will become increasingly critical in the years to come. The resource characteristics of the Peace-Athabasca Delta are such that ecological balance must be achieved in the long-term interests of the local people, as

well as of Canada, the continent and indeed the world. The present reality of ecology is, of course, that man must harness and exploit physical resources in order to produce wealth and hence live. This must not be done, however, at the expense of man's environment.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta area provides those sectors of society who would act constructively in the interests of both man and his environment with a unit capable of being "managed" in terms of the required long-term inputs.

We trust that the recommendations of our report will make a worthwhile contribution to ensuring that this process in fact takes place.

Yours very truly,



Hugh G. Moncrieff,
MONCRIEFF, MONTGOMERY & ASSOCIATES LTD.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fort Chipewyan, the central community in the Peace-Athabasca Delta area, is experiencing increasing population and in the absence of a sharp drop in the birth-rate combined with net emigration will achieve an estimated population level of 2,100 by 1980.

While certain positive social and community progress is being achieved, such gains are being more than nullified by the worsening economy of this insular, immobile community of which the majority of the local people exist well below all recognized poverty lines. Income and employment from fur and fish production and lumbering is sharply reduced with no short-term reversal in sight.

Currently, little tangible progress toward the development of substitutes in the economic base for the traditional income producing areas is being made. That is, to date the development of government employment, local industry, small business, tourism and increased mobility has been virtually nil in terms of real economic impact, with no short-term improvement in sight.

Increasing population, labor force and numbers of family units, against the background of unfavorable economic trends, points to sharply increased levels of social assistance by 1980 unless fundamental, structural shifts in the community's economic base take place. Our report provides recommendations in this regard.

For both social and economic reasons, there is, and will continue to be, a critical need for increasing meaningful local employment opportunities, on-the-job training, educational industry and appropriate vocational counselling. This applies to both men and women, and especially to the young.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta, the Wood Buffalo National Park, Lake Athabasca and the many lakes and rivers, the abundance of wildlife and the predominately wilderness esthetics of the area unquestionably provides a wide variety of development opportunities tied to recreation, tourism, education and research. In this regard, perhaps the most important consideration is to ensure the continuation of the productive capability, wilderness characteristics, water quality and general esthetics of the unique complex. The actual exploitation of the latent economic potential from tourism in the broadest sense, viewed realistically, will require comprehensive planning, much time, considerable outside advice and/or investment, government support and a continually upgraded understanding on the part of local organizations of the nature of the market place and the manner in which it can be exploited.

The large and increasing number of young people in the community require special attention in the planning process. In this regard, there is a critical need for a community-based vocational counselling capability, expanded summer employment opportunities and permanent, post-secondary local employment opportunities.

A variety of opportunities appear to exist now for Fort Chipewyan, with more likely to develop in coming years. Successful exploitation of these opportunities holds forth the promise of both social and economic benefit for the community. Despite increasing population and a much larger potential labor force, the opportunity does appear to exist for substantially improved labor force utilization and income production by 1980. The key to this process is the successful completion of large and widely varied series of specific steps ranging from establishment of the local planning process itself through to the

establishment of a local secondary manufacturing facility. In order that the local people become more confident and more competent in involving themselves in the process of developing their community, it is vital that in the short-term, relatively straight-forward projects capable of producing tangible benefits be undertaken. In this regard, outside counsel from non-governmental sources appears to be a vital ingredient.

It has often been said that the existence of social assistance in a community such as Fort Chipewyan reduces the initiative of the people to take work even when it is available. The availability of assistance has often been blamed for the reduction in trapping effort. While there may well be some truth in these claims, for the most part there appears to be much evidence to the contrary. Should only jobs providing marginal financial return, unsatisfactory working conditions (i.e. a long way from Fort Chipewyan) and little or no personal satisfaction (i.e. from involvement, meaningful supervision and sense of accomplishment) be available, it is likely that welfare will continue to be the logical source of support. However, it is the opinion that should the planning and development program outlined in this report be embarked upon by the community, with the anticipated economic affects, a substantial and increasing percentage of the labor force will turn toward involving themselves in the opportunities which emerge.

Certainly, the possibility of failure or less than the anticipated level of success, provides no valid reason for not trying.

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INTRODUCTION

In April, 1971, Moncrieff, Montgomery & Associates Ltd. entered into a contract with the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project to carry out a socio-economic review of the Lake Athabasca and Peace-Athabasca Delta region. The work to be carried out in line with this contract has now been completed, with our findings and recommendations making up the contents of this report.

In carrying out our research, a large volume of material was collected, however in this report we have endeavoured to present only directly relevant material and wherever possible have excluded such lengthy descriptive and statistical material as is generally found in the traditional "land use" study.

Excellent co-operation has been extended to us by government departments, residents of Fort Chipewyan, those connected with the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project and many others.

The reader of a report such as this must be, and probably is aware that Canada is faced with few social and economic questions of greater significance than that of how to make it possible for people of Indian ancestry to progress toward the achievement of a more equitable participation in Canadian society. This question is, of course, excruciatingly difficult and complex and is complicated even further, it seems obvious, by the fact that many of the native Canadian population find many aspects of urban/industrial Canadian life undesirable and even unacceptable. It would be unrealistic to assume that the trends now evident in Canada respecting urbanization, technology, life style, mobility, vocations and morality are apt to

be altered or even slowed down. On the contrary, there seems to be an increasing trend in almost every area of change. This poses a very serious dilemma for large numbers of Canada's native people of all ages. To the analyst, as well as to many of the native leaders, it is clear that meaningful education, an increasing amount of autonomy, appropriate resource development, vocational and professional training and meaningful overall development of traditional native communities must combine to enable those of Indian ancestry to ultimately assume an acceptable and respectable role in Canadian society.

While the socio-economic researcher must be mindful of virtually all facets of the manner in which a community or region lives and works, the emphasis naturally falls upon matters ultimately related to resources, development opportunities and the manner in which people earn a living. And this appears wholly realistic insofar as historically, a person or persons, unable to participate in the prevailing economic system in some meaningful way almost irresistably becomes an oppressed person.

The reader should also keep in mind that while the identification of valuable resources and viable development opportunities is certainly an important step for any community which strives for progress, of much greater importance, it seems, is the process by which planning takes place, development plans embarked upon, management and finances arranged for, skills developed and projects actually begun. Thus, this report should be viewed as a benchmark, together with information on the kinds of things which might be achieved in the Fort Chipewyan area. It should not be viewed as an

actual blue print. The blue print, and subsequently the action, can only come from the interaction of individuals, the community, government and industry at a level of effectiveness much greater than has been the case to date. A significant section of this report has been devoted to this subject.

SECTION ONE - GENERAL BACKGROUND

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project was established in 1970 to investigate the cause, extent and alternative courses of remedial action respecting low water levels on the Delta. Clearly, according to a large number of qualified persons, the continuation of the low water levels which had developed during the middle of the late 1960's was bound to have an adverse effect of major proportions on two of the area's traditional "cash crops", these being fur and fish, as well as on the overall biological productivity and future recreational and educational value of the area. The result would be a major disaster at two levels, these being local in social and economic terms at one extreme and international in ecological terms at the other.

Consequently, comprehensive hydrological and ecological studies were undertaken focussing on all aspects of the Delta and Lake Athabasca area. In conjunction with these studies, which are still going forward, it was decided to carry out a socio-economic review, focussing upon the needs, desires and capabilities of the people of the area, while at the same time researching and putting into the form of an overall development plan both the Delta-based and non-Delta-based resources.

The objectives agreed upon for the socio-economic study were as follows:

- 1) The formulation of a ten year socio-economic development plan for the Lake Athabasca and Peace-Athabasca Delta areas.

- 2) The identification of viable economic development projects, in terms of the specific feasibility of short-term possibilities and the apparent gross feasibility of longer term possibilities.
- 3) The definition of the overall conceptual framework appropriate to ensure the effective on-going administration and updating of the development plan above-mentioned; this to involve local, government and ultimately private sector input.

Subsequent discussions with the Technical Advisory Committee of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project resulted in the development of two additional secondary objectives. These were as follows:

- 4) Documentation of the socio-economic significance of the Delta's various biological species and resources; and
- 5) Preliminary documentation of the local versus provincial/national/international socio-economic value of these species and resources, particularly where clear choices must be made respecting remedial action on water levels.

In part, the findings and recommendations of this socio-economic review are intended to assist those involved in reaching decisions respecting remedial action on water levels. For example, relatively speaking, how important an income producer is muskrat trapping for the people of Fort Chipewyan and what alternative employment and income earning opportunities do exist. Should it be technically impossible or prohibitively expensive to maintain the Delta's

future fur production capability, what alternative income generating opportunities exist, or could exist in the future.

In reality, however, most of those persons involved in the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project are well aware of the fact that a relatively small part of the dilemma facing the people of Fort Chipewyan today arises from the fact that water levels have recently been down and hence trapping has been poor for three or four years. The fur market's "ups and downs" and the natural periodic dips in the Delta's fur productivity have often combined to produce the same net effect on personal income as in the past three or four years. Naturally, the threatened long-term influence of the Bennett Dam on Delta flooding would introduce a new, clearly different and obviously harmful effect on the Fort Chipewyan area people. However, this does not alter the fact that the people of Fort Chipewyan, like those in literally hundreds of similar predominantly native communities in Canada, are now having to face up to the consequences of urbanization, reduced isolation, increased education without matching vocational opportunity, greater political awareness on the part of native leaders and other similar forces. At the same time, the overall social and economic environment into which these communities are emerging is becoming rapidly more technical, specialized, competitive, economically uncertain and consequently not overly receptive in real terms.

DETAILED STUDY PLAN

The approach which we have followed in carrying out the research is outlined in this section and is summarized graphically in Chart I.

Phase One, reported on in Sections 2 - 9, involved gathering and compiling data and information respecting the appropriate study area boundaries; the physical characteristics of the area; the location, level and characteristics of the area's population; the structure and characteristics of the community itself; and, the past and present economy of the area, including the levels and trends in the area of public assistance.

Based upon the above information projections respecting population, employment, income, education, public assistance levels and skill development were then made (Section 8), the objective here being to attempt to develop a profile of the situation as it may well exist in 1981 in Fort Chipewyan, in the absence of more effective resource utilization, etc.

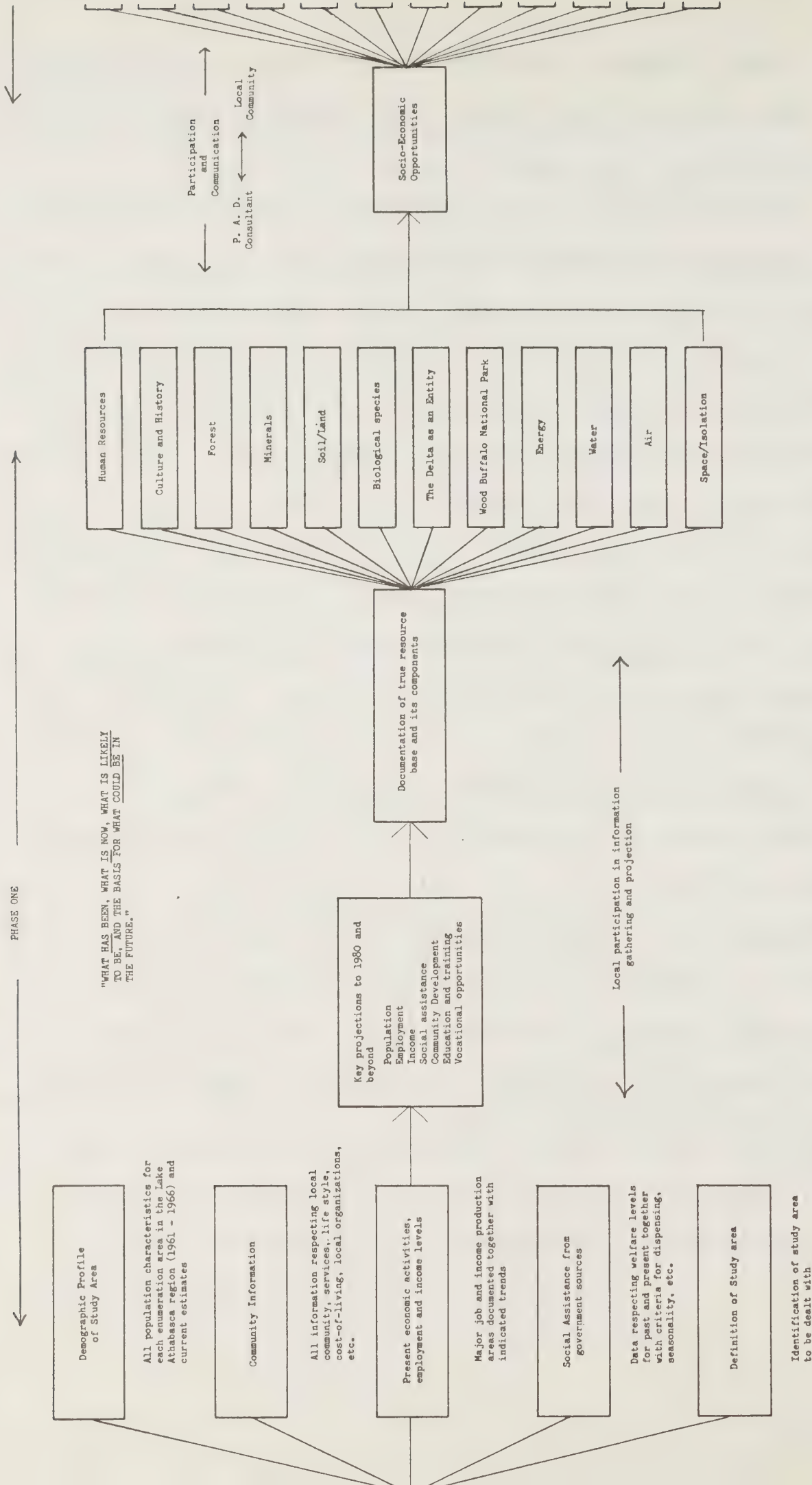
Finally, still within Phase One, the various resource categories are reviewed in order to provide background for the balance of the report dealing with development opportunities.

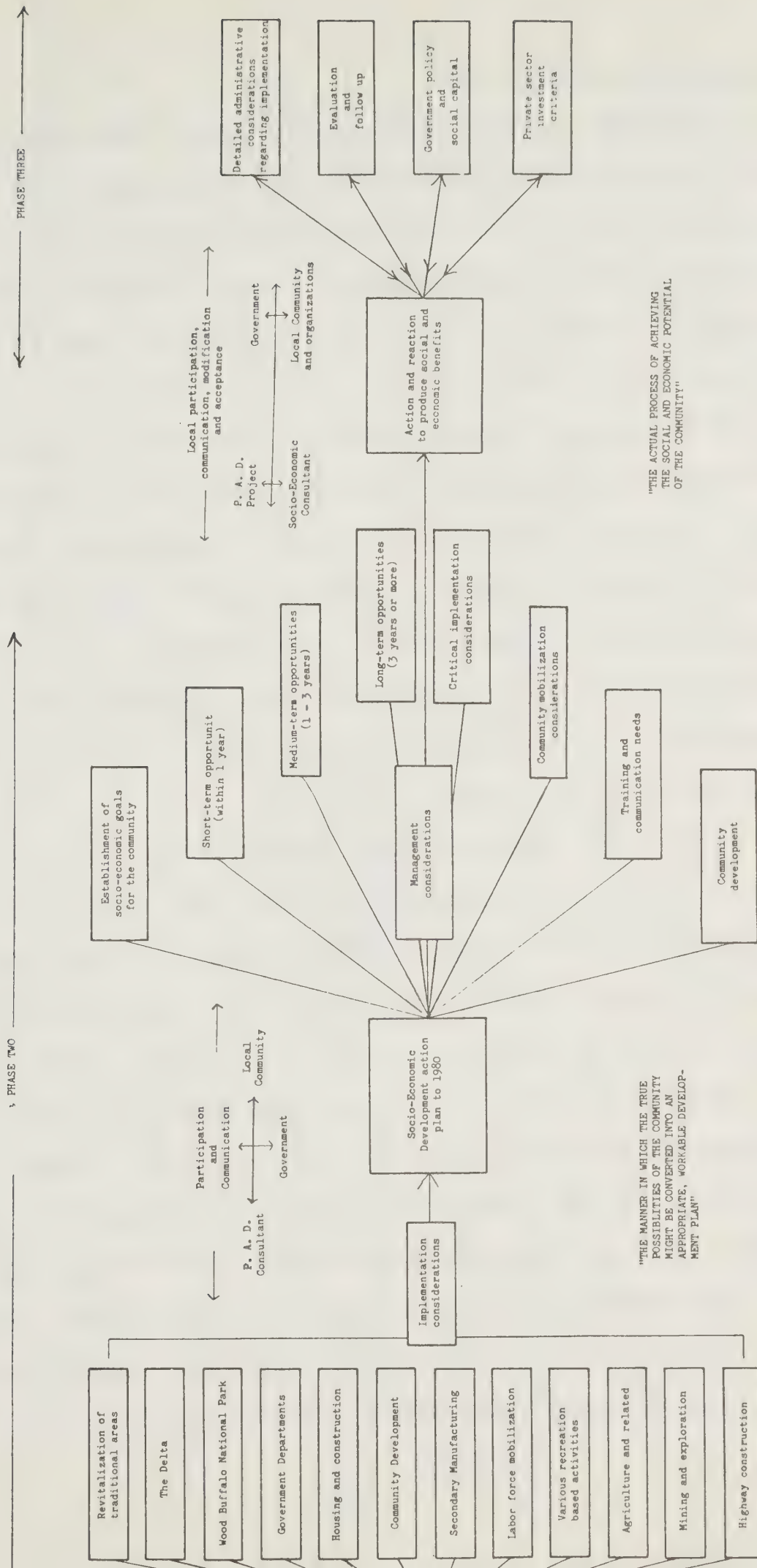
Phase Two, reported on in Sections 10 - 11, involved actually identifying and putting into the form of a development plan the identifiable socio-economic opportunities. These sections include reference to the establishment of socio-economic goals by the community, management considerations, mobilization of the labor force, training needs, etc.

Phase Three of our Work Program deals with the actual process of implementation, evaluation and follow-up respecting the development plan.

The work of the social economist involves the identification of resource development and business opportunities in keeping with the intentions and the capability of the people involved. Our Work Program reflected this approach. The field research included numerous trips to Fort Chipewyan; a circle tour of East-End Lake Athabasca communities including Uranium City; a visit to Fort McMurray and the Great Canadian Oil Sands development; a trip to Regina to meet with various Saskatchewan Government departments; a visit to the National Parks Branch in Calgary; helicopter and boat tours of the Fort Chipewyan and Delta area; and, an extensive correspondence, interview and statistical research program. Approximately twenty days were spent in the Fort Chipewyan area.

While in Fort Chipewyan, every effort was made to identify the felt needs of the people in many areas affecting their lives. Where possible, it was an original objective to obtain substantial communication with and participation of the people in our research. This is a difficult and complicated task which was not fully achieved. However, meaningful grass roots participation is essential and must become a vital part of implementing the recommendations of this report.



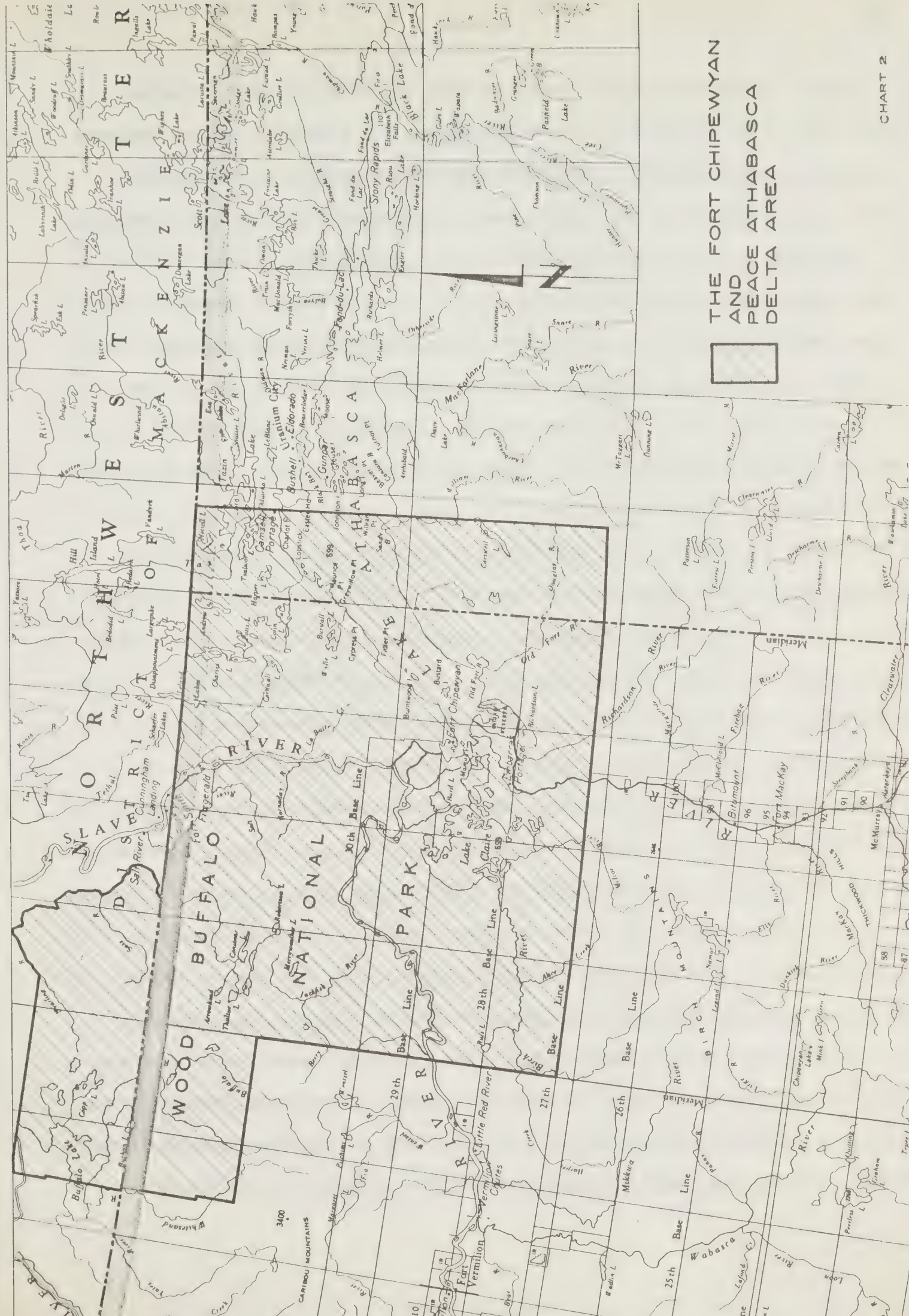


FORT CHIPEWYAN IN PERSPECTIVE

Fort Chipewyan is, and historically always has been, an important community in Northern Alberta. Originally this importance had its origin in the fur trade, while now it is due more to its location at the centre of a vast, sparsely populated area of Northern Alberta having a unique resource base in the form of the Delta. (Chart II)

Only in relatively recent years has there been a community at Fort Chipewyan in the sense that most Canadians think of a community. That is, people living together permanently in a defined area, having a form of local government, building and maintaining permanent homes, taking and attempting to retain wage employment, starting business ventures, submitting to the law of the land on such questions as education, attempting to foster the community's economic base, etc.

From its present location, Fort Chipewyan was truly a major centre of the Canadian fur trade during the last half of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. World demand for furs continued during much of this period at virtually insatiable levels. While the bargaining power and financial strength and expertise of the trading companies and fur buyers was, and still is, always superior to that of the individual trapper, the people of areas such as Fort Chipewyan were able to exchange their furs for the goods they deemed desirable and sufficient. These goods, when supplemented in a very major way by game and fish taken from the land and lakes, provided them with the ability to live.



THE FORT CHIPEWYAN
AND
PEACE ATHABASCA
DELTA AREA



Now, although the culture, values, life style and general approach to existing have remained much the same, it is no longer attractive, nor really practical for the people to live on the trapline, trade furs for their needs and subsist from the bounty of the land. Yet, in the minds of many Canadians, it is a legitimate question to ask "why not"? In these well meaning, if unrealistic people's minds it has been a travesty of justice that so many of those of Indian ancestry have been caught up in the white man's world. It is the belief of such people that the native Canadian would be both happier and better off back in the traditional environment. They feel that insofar as it has been the almost sinister incentives of welfare, housing, health care, education and the personal comforts of urban living which have drawn the native people into white/urban society, then it follows that removing these things would be a positive step. True, educational facilities and content often seem inappropriate or inadequate. Health services may too often be planned on an economic rather than community need basis. Economic development, vocational counselling and job generation seem poorly co-ordinated. Social assistance delivery and administration often seems illogical.

Yet, the sensitive observer must conclude when he looks at Fort Chipewyan and similar communities, that in the context of Canadian society and its economy, the Indian people must become more autonomous and effective participants over the years to come. It follows therefore that rather than adopt a somewhat isolationist approach to the development of communities, the native people must become better equipped to participate in society as a whole.

Ultimately, such capability leads to the viable alternative of opting out in a sense.

The point we are attempting to make here is rather difficult, but important. While there may still be a partially viable alternative in Fort Chipewyan to an increasingly urban, employment-oriented community, by virtue of the available renewable resources, most similar communities have no such alternative. And certainly, in Fort Chipewyan, when we look ahead even a few years to decreasing isolation, tourism and other forms of development, we must realize that this community has but one option. That is to aggressively develop into a viable community.

The period of transition is well underway and meaningful progress is being made. Local government is gradually developing, community facilities and services are improving, local organizations are becoming more autonomous and effective, etc. However, one thing has been largely missing during this period and still is. Meaningful job opportunities. This subject will make up the major part of the balance of this report, however, several additional comments are set out here in order to sharpen our perspective of Fort Chipewyan and its people at this point in time.

The significance of employment opportunities

Firstly, it must be remembered that the people of the Fort Chipewyan area are predominately Indians and Metis. For a complex series of reasons, Canadians of Indian ancestry are discriminated against by the Canadian economic and social system, this causing untold psychological damage to those affected.

Perhaps the most important visible reason for this discrimination is an almost complete lack of academic, technical, managerial, professional and other specialized knowledge and capability. It is our belief that the various forms which discrimination takes, as it relates to employment opportunities, springs mainly from this lack of skills and consequent inability to participate effectively in job situations.

This leads one logically to the conclusion that education in its many and varied forms, delivered in a more appropriate way, provides the long-term key. In a sense it does. And yet, at present, the progress being made through the educational system by the young people and the adults of such communities as Fort Chipewyan is discouraging. The drop-out rate is very high and progress to university and technical schools is infrequent to nil. Why should this be the case? Although we know that teaching content, home study environment, parental involvement and counselling and other areas are in need of change and improvement, these are only a part of the answer.

As one looks at Fort Chipewyan, important points come to mind. Firstly, employment opportunities having academic education as a prerequisite are virtually non-existent locally. Thus, even those rare individuals who complete all or most of high school can not become employed productively in Fort Chipewyan. Secondly, and related to the previous point, is the fact that meaningful on-the-job training is also not available in Fort Chipewyan. Thirdly, a major underlying reason for the lack of progress of Fort Chipewyan people through the educational system clearly seems to

be the lack of true desire on the part of individuals to become "educated" and hence obtain marketable job skills. And certainly this underlying, almost "automatic" desire for and willingness to absorb education will take many years to develop. Yet, the existence of more job opportunities should have a positive and relatively immediate effect.

Our exposure to Fort Chipewyan leads us to conclude several important points:

- 1) The existence of a gradually increasing number of meaningful employment situations into which those persons produced by the local schools could flow would have a very favorable long-term effect on many facets of the community.
- 2) The existence of local job opportunities requiring education-produced skills would ultimately increase the people's mobility and frequency of successful relocation in a way far more effective than artificial relocation programs such as those presently in force.
- 3) The existence of employment opportunities suitable for the employment of present day and future household heads would introduce a new dimension into family and home life which overall would be beneficial to the community.

- 4) The existence of job opportunities in Fort Chipewyan and the consequent ultimate beneficial effect on living standards and mobility would very likely have a positive long-term effect on aspiration levels, particularly of the young people. It is safe to say, in our opinion, that the development of such aspirations and matching, achievable opportunities, must be an extremely high priority for the native people of Canada, and for those at Fort Chipewyan.

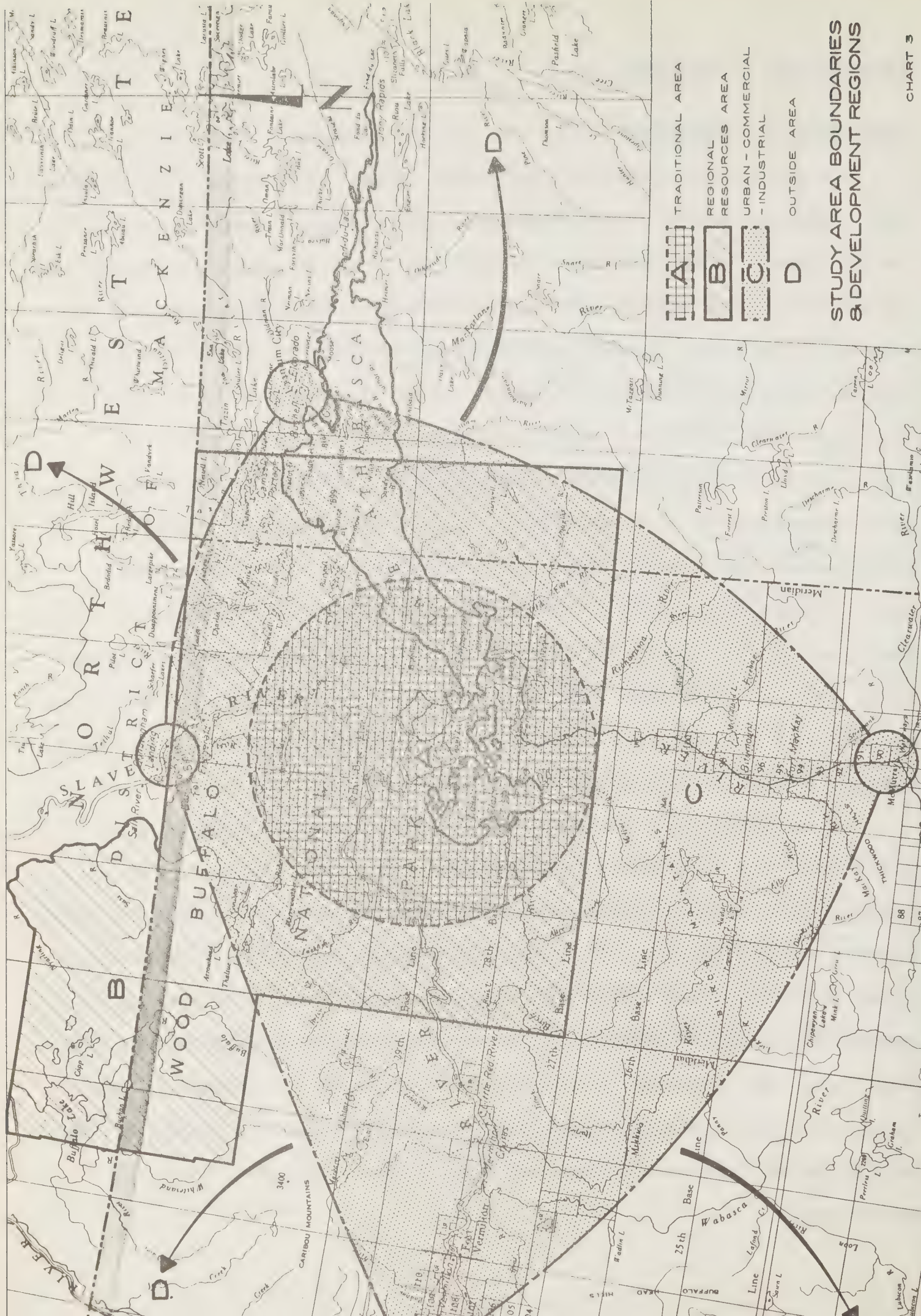
Fort Chipewyan, as this report will outline, lacks the above referred opportunity. In fact, by normal Canadian community standards, it could be classified as an economic disaster area and the same can be said about many similar native communities. Fortunately, some opportunities for development in various forms do exist and there can be no question of the Town disappearing. On the contrary, it is growing and will continue to grow. In order that those persons now living in the community, and those not yet born, might reverse the present trend toward complete obsolescence within Canadian society, it will be necessary for new policy directions to be taken by governments at all levels. It is hoped that this report will provide some useful comment in this regard.

SECTION TWO - THE STUDY AREA

DEFINITION OF THE AREA

As this is a social and economic study, as opposed to a "land-use" planning study of a pre-defined geographical area, no specific "study area" boundaries will be defined as such. That is, there is no specific area within which resources will be identified and not beyond. The basic reason for this, aside from the fact that any such boundaries would be purely arbitrary, is that over a period of time the types and locations (i.e. distance from Fort Chipewyan) of economic opportunities which the people will be in the position to take advantage of will gradually expand. Thus, as cultural, educational and mobility considerations allow, the geographical area of significance to Fort Chipewyan will become enlarged. Needless to say, it is implicit here that such expansion would have to be seen as desirable and achievable by the community, its organizations and the people as individuals. Otherwise, those opportunities further afield would remain unexploited.

It is necessary, however, to establish certain geographical parameters for this study, particularly as they relate to the traditional resource base; the potential resource base; the "urban/commercial/industrial" belt which encircles the primary Peace-Athabasca Delta/Lake Athabasca resource area; and, the general economic community beyond. Chart III depicts the parameters of the study area and provides insight into the manner in which we have approached the overall analysis of future development opportunities. As indicated, the study area has been broken into four basic categories.



- A** TRADITIONAL AREA
- B** REGIONAL RESOURCES AREA
- C** URBAN - COMMERCIAL - INDUSTRIAL
- D** OUTSIDE AREA

**STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES
& DEVELOPMENT REGIONS**

Area A

A somewhat indefinitely demarcated area within 50 - 75 miles of Fort Chipewyan can be considered as the primary, traditional portion of the study area. It is within this approximately 6,000 square mile area of marshland, lakes, rivers and meadows that we know the vast majority of fur trapping, subsistence hunting, forestry and commercial fishing and processing has taken place.

Area B

A much larger, equally ill-defined area of approximately 26,000 square miles covering the Alberta portion of the Wood Buffalo National Park, the Alberta and Saskatchewan portion of the Canadian Shield north of Lake Athabasca and a portion of the prospective mineral area south of Lake Athabasca. This very sparsely populated area contains existing economic activities, as well as potential resource development opportunities in areas such as tourism and recreation. Insofar as there are various resources and opportunities within Area A which have not yet been fully exploited, Area B should be viewed as a separate larger area which includes Area A, rather than a distinct additional area.

Area C

The "urban-commercial-industrial" belt which encircles the above described areas. This belt includes the adjacent communities such as Fort McMurray, High Level, Fort Smith and to some extent Uranium City. These centres, and centres like them, will provide the most logical and suitable alternative employment areas for Fort Chipewyan area residents for some considerable time to come and they have therefore been set out as an integral part of the study area.

Area D

The general economic community beyond is the fourth area to which we feel specific attention should be paid. Naturally there are no boundaries to this area, although from a practical standpoint it seems reasonable for us to consider such areas as Edmonton, northern Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan in general, and centres within the Northwest Territories.

The above "areas" were developed during the work program, more as a logical manifestation of the manner in which economic activity and employment in Fort Chipewyan might best evolve over a period of time.

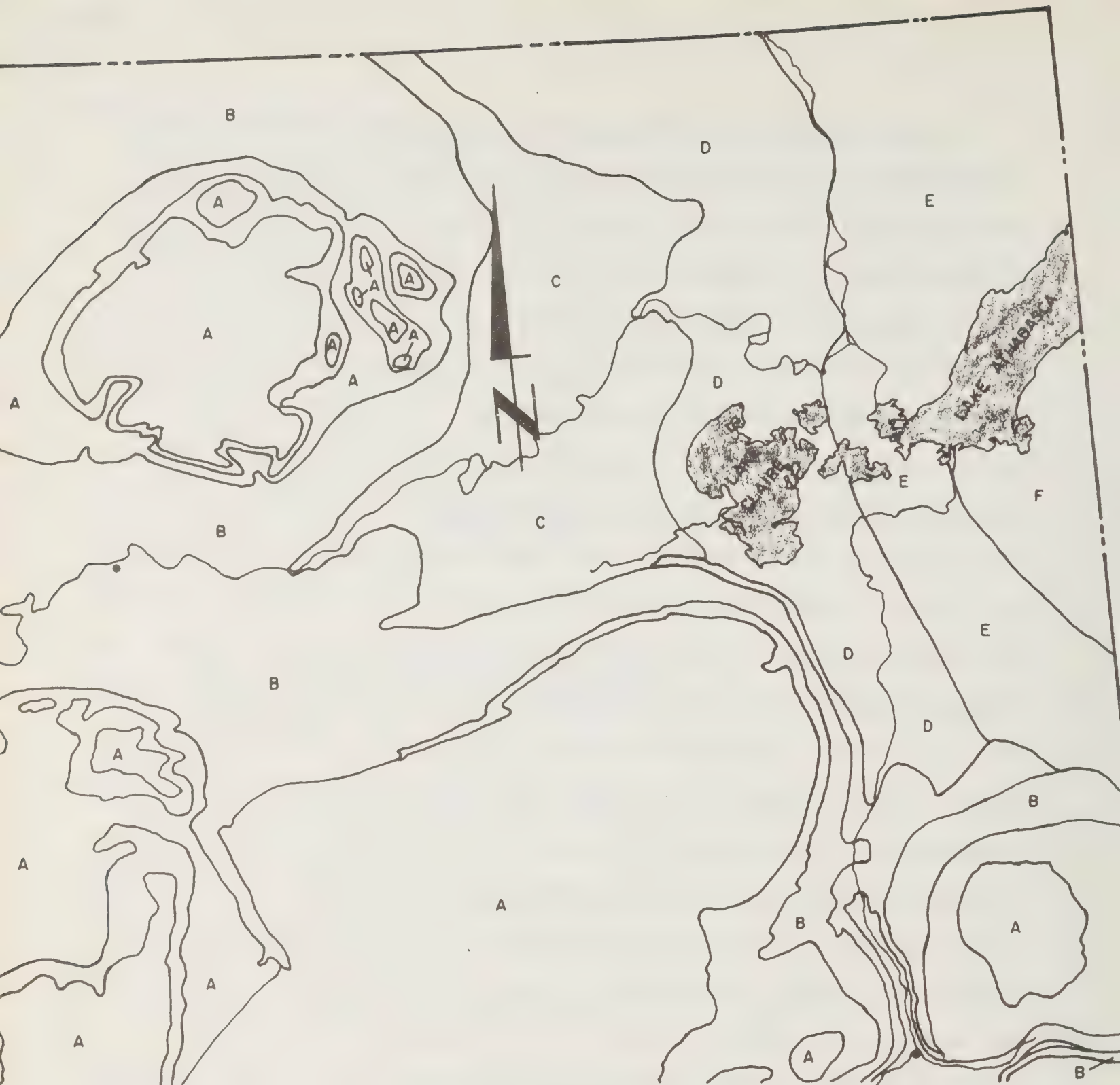
BASIC PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

In this section, reference is made basically to Areas A and B of Chart III.

Located in the Peace-Athabasca Delta at the extreme west end of Lake Athabasca, Fort Chipewyan is 360 air miles north of Edmonton; 135 miles north of Fort McMurray on the Athabasca River; and 100 miles south of Fort Smith, N. W. T. on the Slave River. (Chart IV) It is located just east of the boundary of the Wood Buffalo National Park.

The area contains six communities, in addition to Fort Chipewyan, these being Uranium City, Fond du Lac, Camsell Portage, Stony Rapids/Black Lake, (all in Saskatchewan) Fort Fitzgerald and Sweetgrass Landing, both in Alberta. Total population in the vast overall Lake Athabasca area is estimated to be 5,000 as of 1970.

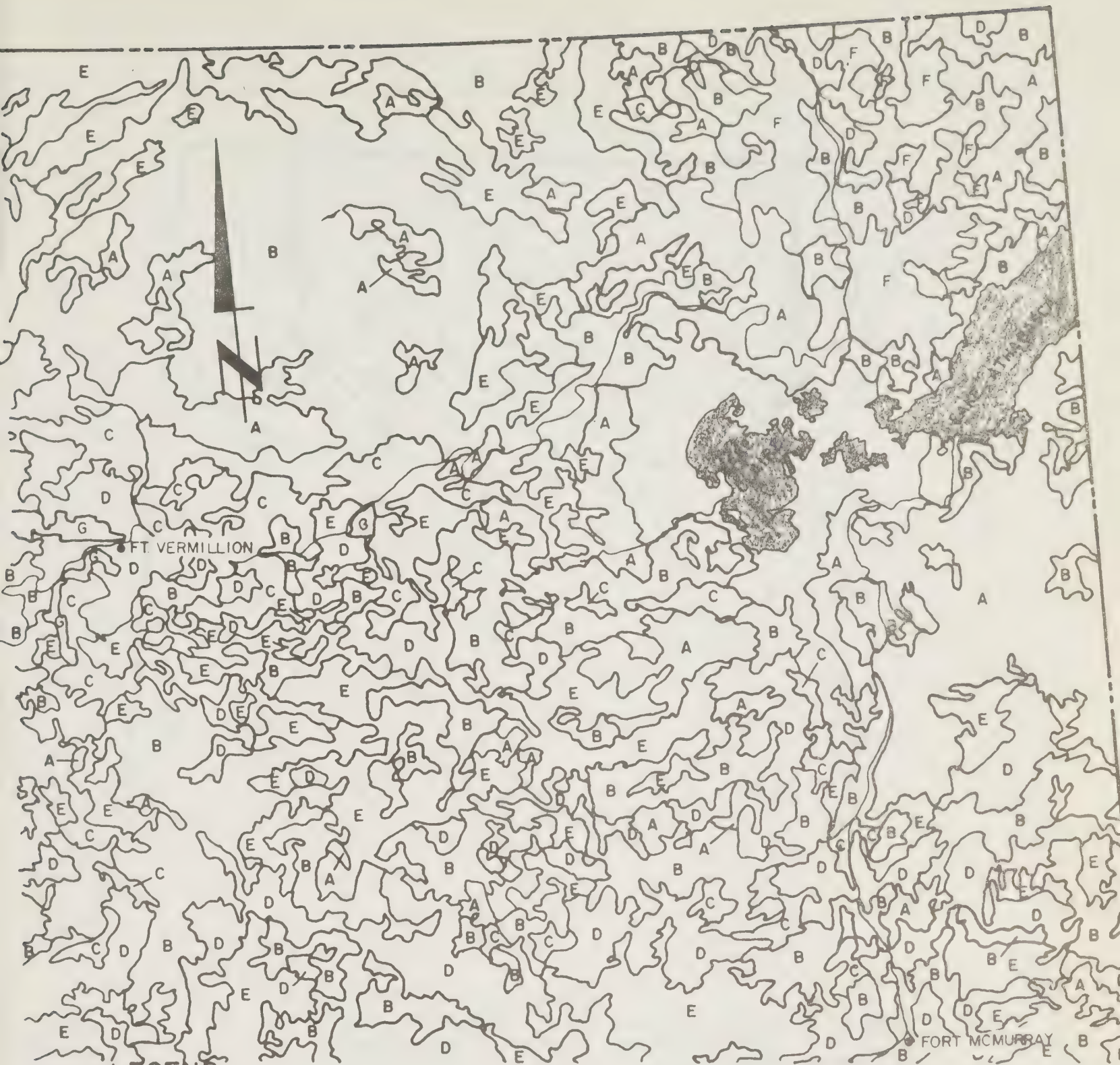
The study area is split by two major physiographic regions, these being the Interior Plains and the Canadian Shield. The entire area is contained in what is known as the subarctic climatic region. Broadly speaking, it contains two major vegetation regions and three soil regions, with the Delta marshlands providing additional uniqueness in this regard. The area contains permafrost of the discontinuous variety. Muskeg frequency is high in the north-east section and medium in the south-west. There is no significant developed agricultural land in the area at present. Excepting the north-east portion, the study area is found within the Boreal forest region, with some significant commercial stands of mature spruce in the Wood Buffalo National Park. A variety of minerals are found within the study area, with uranium being the most significant historically and in terms of current exploration effort. The Athabasca tar sands is a major energy resource located immediately south of the study area. In land-use terms, the Wood Buffalo National Park and the Saskatchewan/Alberta areas immediately north and south of Lake Athabasca are considered to be areas of undeveloped scenic potential. Transportation within the study area and between the study area and the outside world is basically limited to air service, chartered and scheduled, as well as summer barge freight service and a winter trucking road.



LEGEND

- A SHALE , MINOR SANDSTONE , BEAR FM.
- B SHALE
- C LIMESTONE , SHALE , MINOR DOLOMITE (UPPER DEVONIAN)
- D LIMESTONE , DOLOMITE , GYPSUM , MINOR SALT (MIDDLE DEVONIAN)
- E IGNEOUS AND METAMORPHIC ROCK
- F SEDIMENTARY ROCKS

BEDROCK GEOLOGY



LEGEND

PRODUCTIVE FOREST LAND

- A CONIFEROUS
- B MIXED WOOD
- C DECIDUOUS

NON-PRODUCTIVE FOREST LAND

- D PRODUCTIVE FOREST
POTENTIALLY PRODUCTIVE

NON- FOREST LAND

- E MUSKEG, MARSH &
BRUSH LAND
- F ROCK BARREN

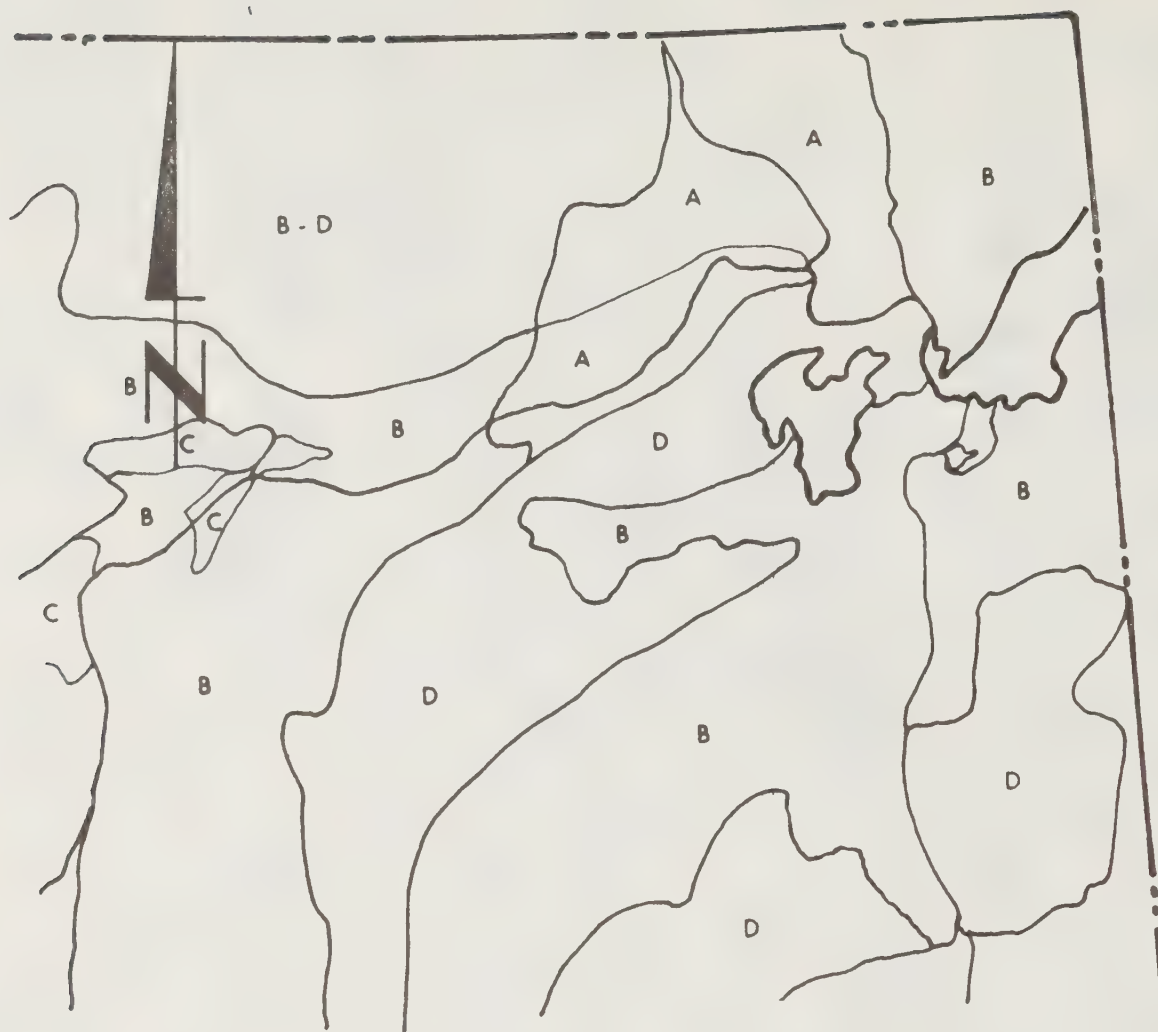
ALL OTHER URBAN & AGRICULTURAL LAND (G)

MEAN SEASONAL TEMPERATURES

SPRING 28°
 SUMMER 62°
 FALL 35°
 WINTER -12°

ANNUAL MEAN PRECIPITATION - 17

PRODUCTIVE FOREST LAND



LEGEND

- A - BROWN SOILS
- B - GREY WOODED SOILS
- C - UNDIFFERENTIATED MOUNTAIN COMPLEX
- D - ORGANIC SOILS

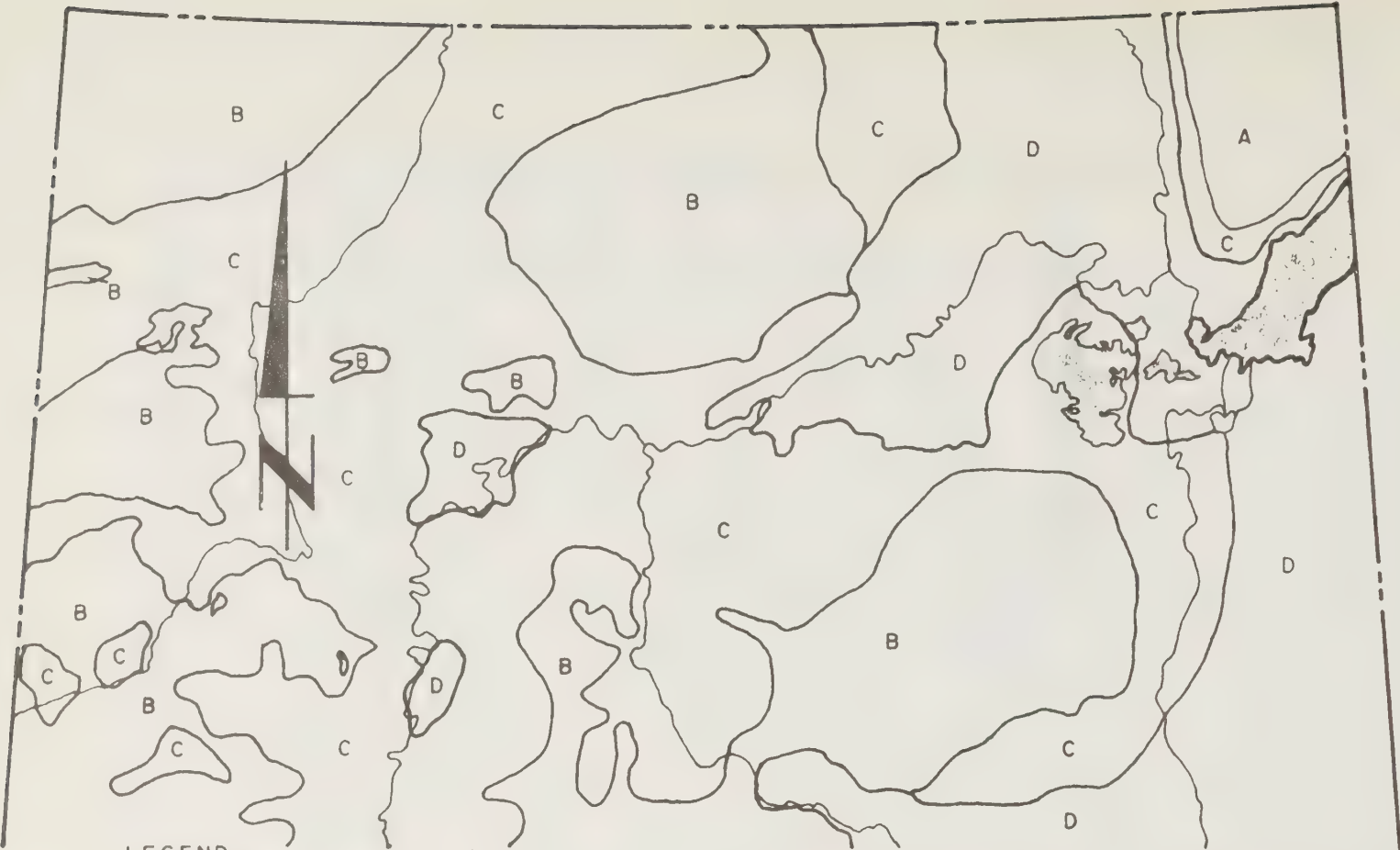
SOILS



LEGEND

- A - PRECAMBRIAN AREA - FOREST
- B - SAND DUNE AREAS - FOREST & LIMITED GRAZING
- C - MUSKEG, SAND & OUTWASH GRAVELS - FOREST
- D - MUSKEG (70%)
- E - MUSKEG (30%)
- F - MUSKEG (50%)
- G - MUSKEG (10%)
- H - DARK BROWN, BLACK & DARK GREY SOILS

LAND RESOURCES

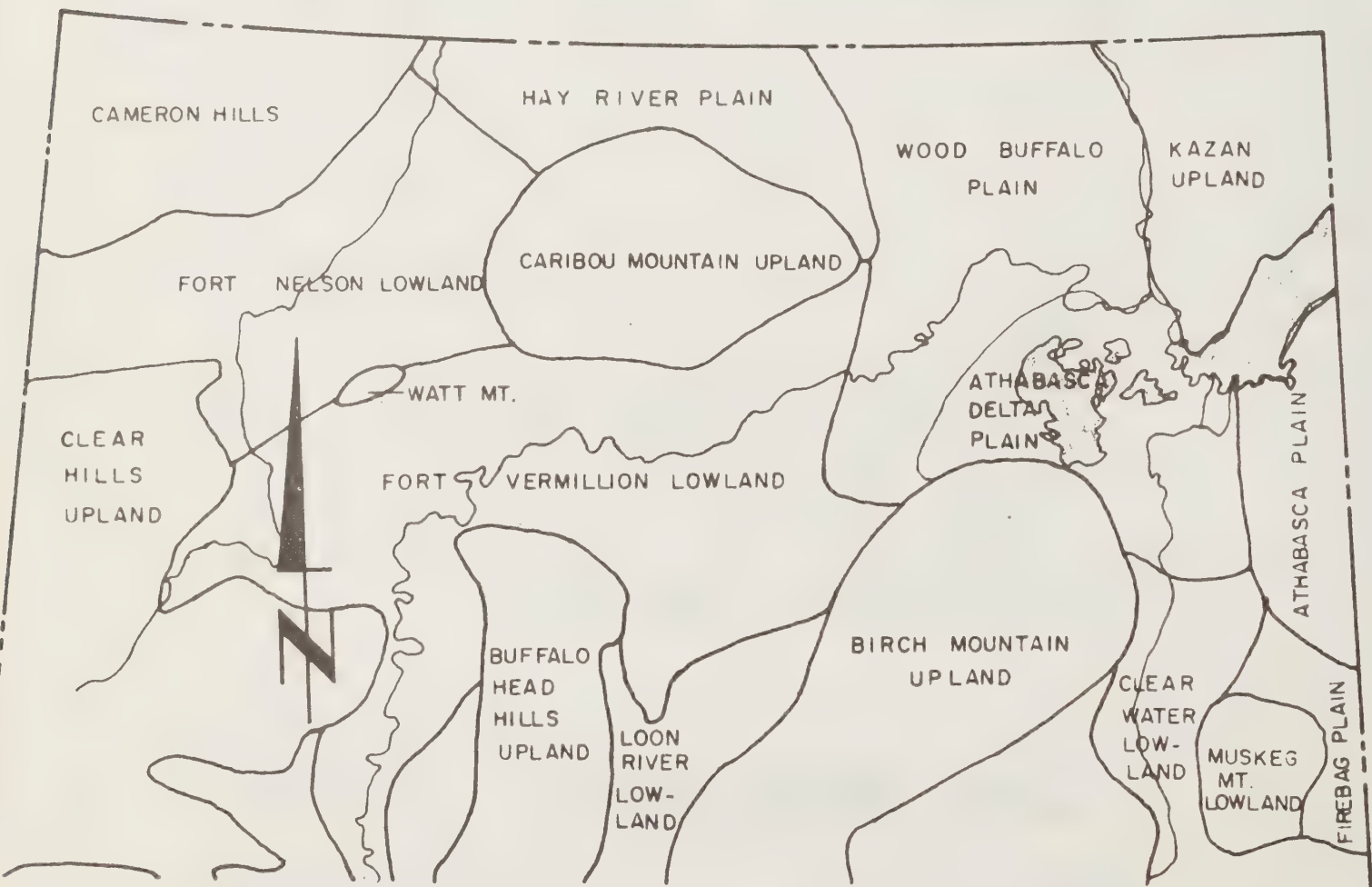


LEGEND

- A: BARE BEDROCK SURFACE
- B: GROUND MORaine & HUMMOCKY MORaine TILL
- C: LAKE DEPOSITS, SILT & CLAY
- D: OUTWASH, LAKE DEPOSITS & WIND DEPOSITS, SAND & GRAVEL

SUPERFICIAL DEPOSITS

CHART 4E



PLAIN AREAS

CHART 4F



LEGEND

A = ASPEN
S = SPRUCE
AS = ASPEN & SPRUCE
X = LICHENS

VEGETATION

TABLE I

Population for Study Area Enumeration Areas
for 1961 - 1966, with estimates to 1970

	Enumeration Area #'s		1961 Population	1966 Population	5 Year Change	1970 est. Population	% Change from 1966
	1961	1966					
Fort Chipewyan	173	409	717	1,026	+309	1,600	+ 56%
Sweetgrass Landing	172	408	86	231	+145	NIL	-100%
Sub Total			803	1,257	454	1,600	+ 28%
Fort Fitzgerald and area	171	407	370	129	-241	100 (est)	- 23%
Chipewyan Reserve	182	401	74	NIL	- 74	NIL	-100%
Sub Total			1,247	1,386		1,700	+ 23%
Uranium City, Sask.	146-8 150-3	305-7	N/A	2,147	-	2,400	+ 11%
Stony Rapids/Fond du Lac	132	304	N/A	780	-	730	- 7%
Camsell Portage	149	308	N/A	55	-	55	-
Total			N/A	4,368	-	4,885	+ 11%

Source: Statistics Canada (1961 - 1966) and Local Estimate (1970)

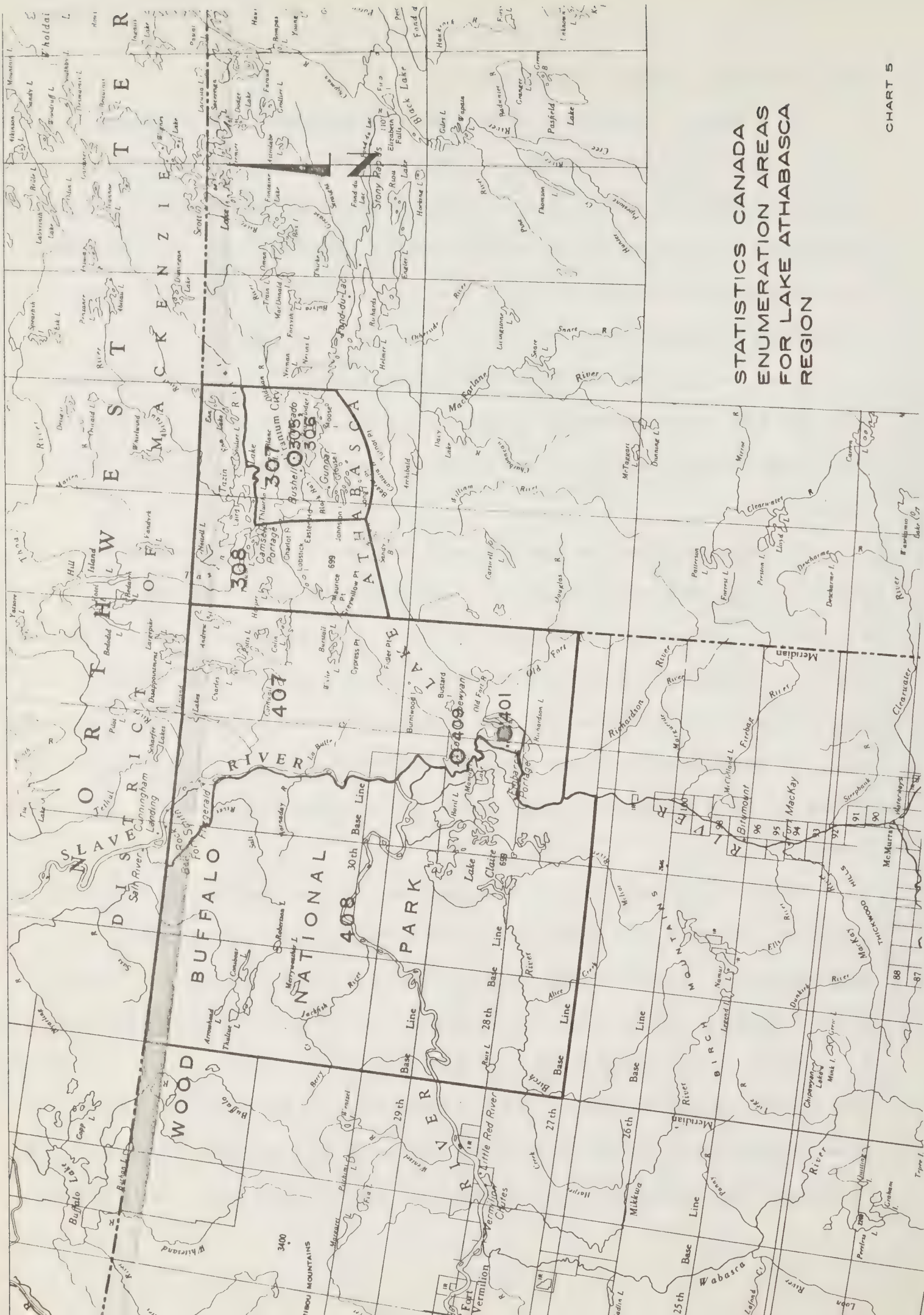
SECTION THREE - POPULATION PROFILE

As a basis for planning social and economic development, trends in the location and composition of population are critical. Unfortunately, for the study area under review current population data is difficult to develop on a precise basis and will not be officially available until the results of the Statistics Canada 1971 Census are available in the spring of 1972.

Data on population was gathered not only for Fort Chipewyan, but for the Lake Athabasca region as a whole. Chart V indicates the geographical areas for which data was gathered for the years 1961-66.

Current population estimates for the study area are shown in Table I. As the settlement of Sweetgrass Landing was abandoned as a place of permanent residence in 1968, a sub-total has been shown for Fort Chipewyan and Sweetgrass Landing, and for the balance of our population analysis the two communities have been considered as one. A further sub-total has been taken for the Alberta areas, as it is in this area basically which Fort Chipewyan acts as the major community.

Table I points toward an increase in the overall study area of some 100 persons per year, with 1970 population estimated to be approximately 4,900, with this probably having risen to 5,000 in 1971. During the 10 year period covered by this data, there has been a constant trend away from isolated trapline living (i.e. throughout the Park, on the Reserve, etc.) towards the towns. Undoubtedly, a good number have moved away from the area completely, however Fort Chipewyan has absorbed a considerable number and has itself shown a



STATISTICS CANADA
ENUMERATION AREAS
FOR LAKE ATHABASCA
REGION

TABLE II

Selected Population Characteristics for Fort Chipewyan,
the Chipewyan Reserve and Sweetgrass Landing areas

(1961 - 1966)

	<u>1961</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Total Population	803	100	1,257	100	+58%
Total Males)	430	53.5	669	52.5	- 1.0
) Sex					
Total Females)	373	46.5	588	47.5	+ 1.0
Total Under 4 years old)	150	18.5	250	20.0	+ 1.5
)					
Total Under 9 years old)	262	32.6	442	35.0	+ 2.4
)					
Total Under 14 years old)	330	41.0	551	44.0	+ 3.0
)					
Total Under 19 years old)	404	50.4	661	52.6	+ 1.2
)					
Total Under 24 years old)	476	59.3	768	61.1	+ 1.8
) Age					
Total Under 29 years old)	533	66.3	868	69.0	+ 2.7
)					
Total Under 39 tears old)	618	77.0	994	79.0	+ 2.0
)					
Total Under 49 years old)	685	85.5	1,096	87.0	+ 1.5
)					
Total Under 54 years old)	716	89.4	1,124	89.5	+ .1
)					
Total Over 55 years old)	87	10.6	133	10.5	- .1
Number of families)	149		224		+50.0
)					
Average family size) Family	5.4		5.7		+ 6.0
)					
Average age of head)	44		40		- 9.0

Source: Statistics Canada - Special computer run by
University of Alberta,
Department of Sociology.

56% increase over the past 5 years. Aside from Uranium City, (a company town almost entirely dependent for its existence and population retention on the Eldorado Nuclear operation) which has experienced an increasing population between 1966 and the present, but which is overall on a declining trend since 1961, Fort Chipewyan is the basic growth centre within the study area.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The significance of Fort Chipewyan's population growth can only be assessed in the light of additional facts concerning age groups, migration patterns, family formation rates and other demographic characteristics. Other than the complete Statistics Canada analysis which we do have for 1961 and 1966, such information is not available on a reliable basis covering the current population. The 1971 population data will, therefore, be significant in this regard. However, it can be reasonably assumed that trends evident in the 5 year period between 1961 and 1966 are apt to have continued to the present time and will for some time in the future.

Table II provides an analysis of various population characteristics for the combined Fort Chipewyan/Sweetgrass Landing areas. It is apparent that the increase of 454 during this five year period was made up of some 250 newborn children, 74 persons moving in from the Reserve, plus a net increase of 130 resulting from migration and a falling death rate.

During the period 1966 - 1971, the vast majority of the Sweetgrass Landing population relocated to Fort Chipewyan, this accounting for at least 175 - 200 of the estimated 574 person increase from 1966. There seems every reason to believe that the

TABLE III

Selected Comparisons of Age and Family Size

	<u>1966</u>	
	<u>Fort Chipewyan</u>	<u>Alberta</u>
Percent Under 24 Years of Age	61.1	56.1 (1)
Percent Under 4 Years of Age	20.0	14.0 (1)
Average Family Size	5.7	3.8 (2)

(1) Census Division 12 in Northern Alberta

(2) Total Alberta

Source: Statistics Canada

community has maintained the live birth rate from the previous 5 year period, which would have produced an estimated 250 new children between 1966 and 1971. Thus migration from Sweetgrass and new births alone added approximately 425 - 450 new persons to Fort Chipewyan. The balance of the increase to the estimated level of 1,600 would quite reasonably be accounted for by general immigration to the community and a slight increase in the transient families related to government service.

The significant trends revealed in the period 1961 - 1966 are the very large and slightly increasing (59.3% to 61.1%) portion of the total population under 24 years of age; the 50% increase in the total number of families; the increasing average family size; and the decreasing average age of family heads. There is every indication that during the period 1966 to 1970 these trends have continued and it is probable that as of 1971, as many as 63% of the total population were under 24 and some 50% under 29.

There are some significant variances between the population characteristics of Fort Chipewyan and the balance of the Northern Alberta region and Alberta as a whole. Some examples are shown in Table III, Selected Comparisons of Age and Family Size. This population profile of youth and larger families is in line with the profile in most other predominately native communities in Canada today.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED POPULATION LEVELS

The current population of Fort Chipewyan is 1,600 and rising. As of 1970, there appears to be some 400 persons between the ages of 19 and 45. From Table II we can estimate that an additional 125 - 150 will move into this age bracket during the next 5 years. Thus in the absence of substantial effective relocation efforts on the part of the people, or a sharp reduction in the birth rate, there is no question about the population trend in Fort Chipewyan over the next 10 years. The town will grow rather substantially.

Assuming zero migration, and a continuation of the current birth and death rates, the following population levels would be produced by 1975 and 1980. (Table IV)

TABLE IV

CURRENT AND PROJECTED POPULATION FOR FORT CHIPEWYAN

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Average Annual Increase</u>
1961 Actual	803	-	-
1966 Actual	1,257	454	91
1971 Estimated	1,600	343	69
1975 Projected	1,840	240	60
1980 Projected	2,165	325	65

The necessity to base projections on only estimated current population detracts somewhat from their validity. However, our familiarity with the community would indicate that any error is likely to be on the conservative side. This, plus the distinct possibility of an increased, rather than a stable live birth rate and a continuing reduction in overall mortality rates lends considerable weight to the possibility of a population level approaching 2,400 by 1980. This would represent an average annual net gain of over 9 years of some 90 persons. This does not seem unreasonable.

For planning purposes a population level in 1980 between 2,200 and 2,400 is appropriate. Here, we have not considered the economic situation which might prevail. However, an improving economy would support growth and there is every indication that the continuation of the current, depressed economy would not have the opposite effect.

SECTION FOUR - THE ECONOMY OF THE AREA - PAST AND PRESENT

This section provides a review of the major past and current economic activity areas of significance in the study area. These activities are basically found within Area A and to some extent Area B of Chart III.

The purpose of this portion of the research is to obtain a basis for an assessment of the manner in which the economic base appears to be developing toward 1980. The trends which are identified will obviously have a significant influence on the formulation of socio-economic goals for the area.

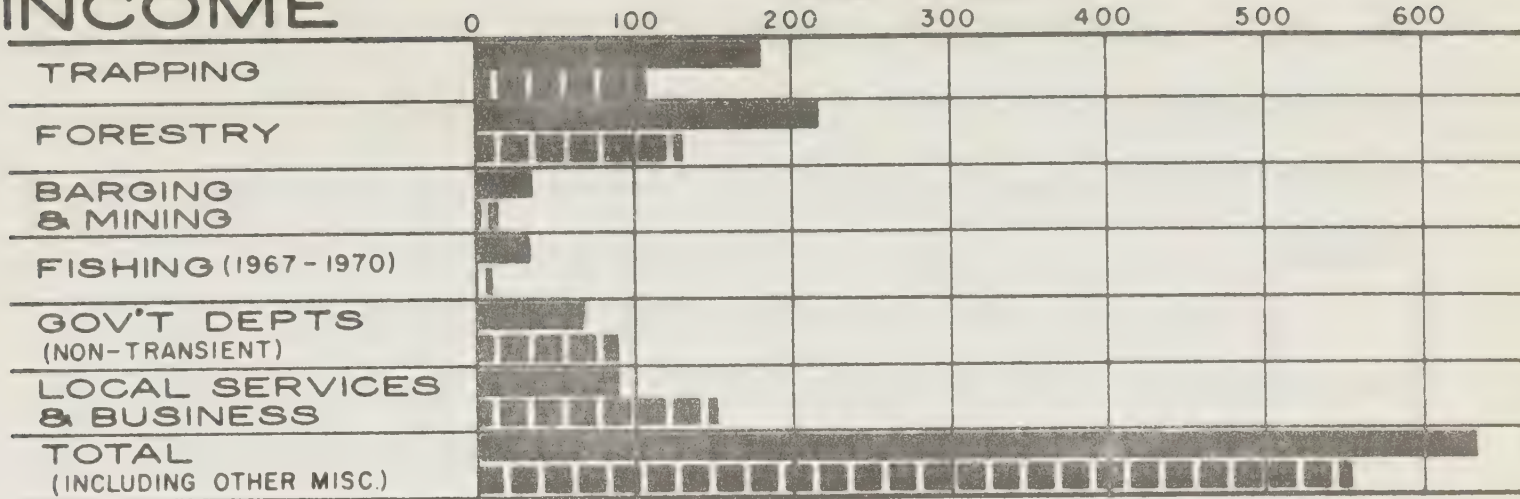
Each activity area will be reviewed from the standpoint of past impact (i.e. jobs, income and numbers of people involved), current status and future direction. On the whole, precise data is unavailable and so naturally it has been necessary to utilize estimates. Also, in some areas information is somewhat more plentiful and reliable than in others. Despite the fairly major information gaps which do exist, we do not feel that our ability to appraise the situation has been significantly hampered.

Chart VI summarizes the estimated significance of the various income producing categories within the study area for the years 1965-70. Also shown, for comparative purposes, are the estimated number of persons actively involved, during each of these years. It should be stressed here that we are not referring to man-month or man-year equivalents, but rather to the total number of persons involved in each category during the course of the year shown.

While this study's terms of reference refer to the Lake Athabasca Region as a whole, specific data on income and employment has been collected only for the Fort Chipewyan area and its people.

INCOME

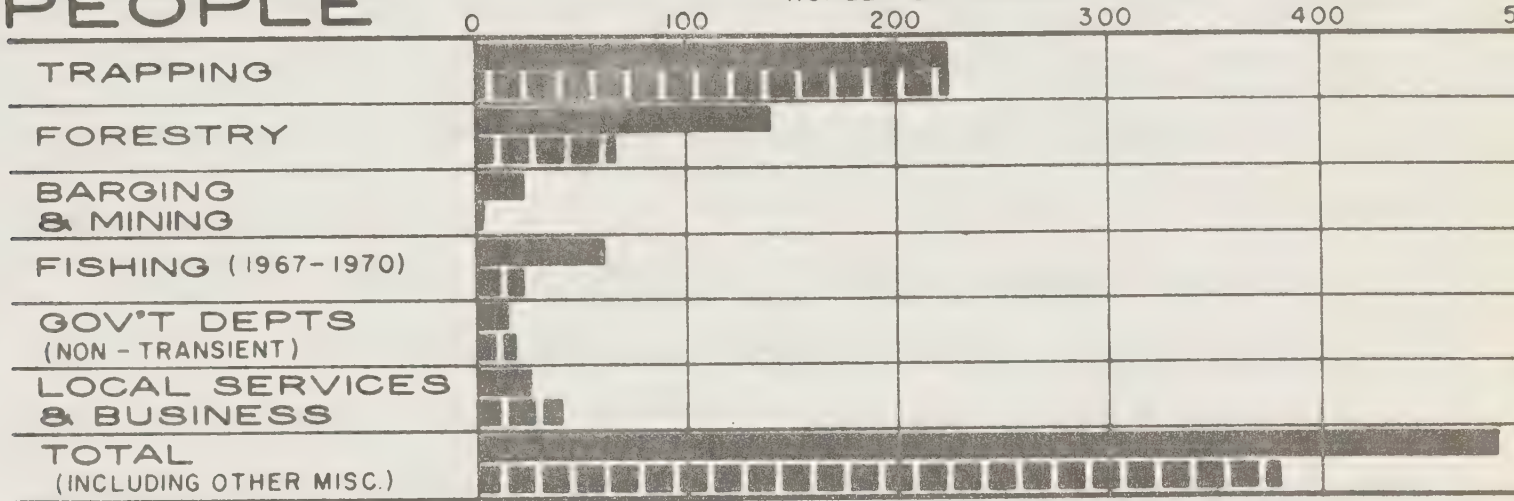
INCOME IN DOLLARS



* \$400 INCOME ASSESSMENT TO BE 1 MONTH EMPLOYMENT IN 1965 & 1970.

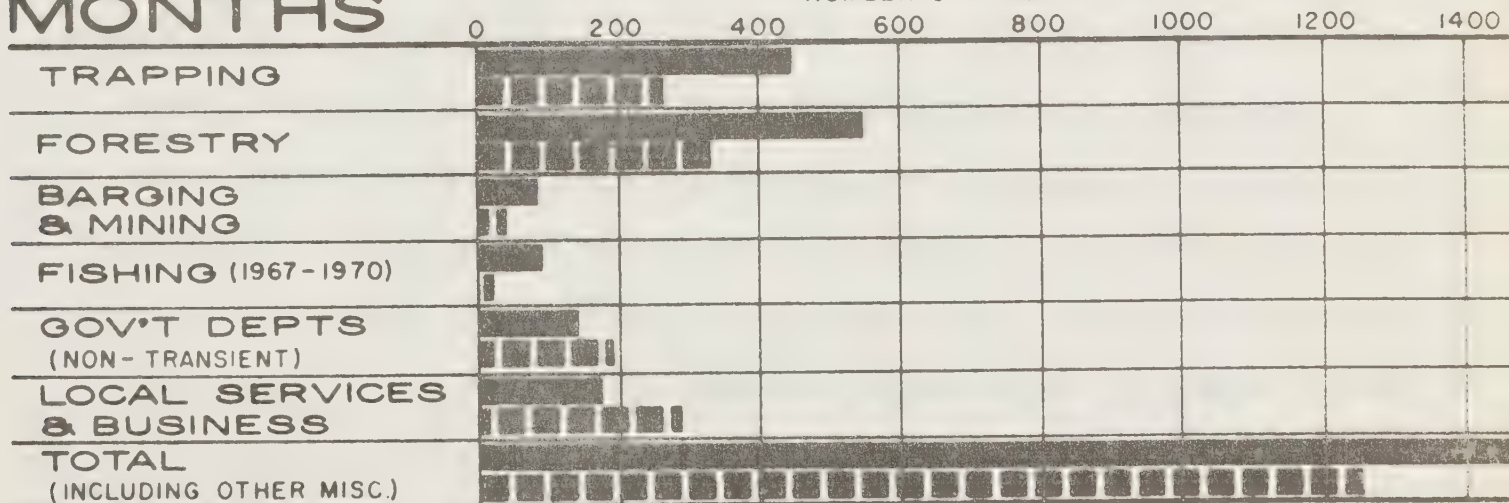
PEOPLE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE



MAN MONTHS

NUMBER OF MONTHS



■ - 1965

■ - 1970

MAJOR INCOME PRODUCING & EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE IN FORT CHIPEWYAN AREA (1965-1970)

The insular nature of the community to date justifies this, we believe, and further comment will be made in this regard later in the report.

TRAPPING

Historically, the dominant income producing activity within the study area, the trapping of muskrat, beaver, mink and certain other species of somewhat lesser importance has produced millions of dollars of income (or income equivalent in goods) for the native people of the Delta area. In fact, trapping activity has been largely responsible for the maintenance of the traditional native life style, until relatively recently, when for various reasons the people began to migrate toward Fort Chipewyan in order to obtain various urban-type benefits.

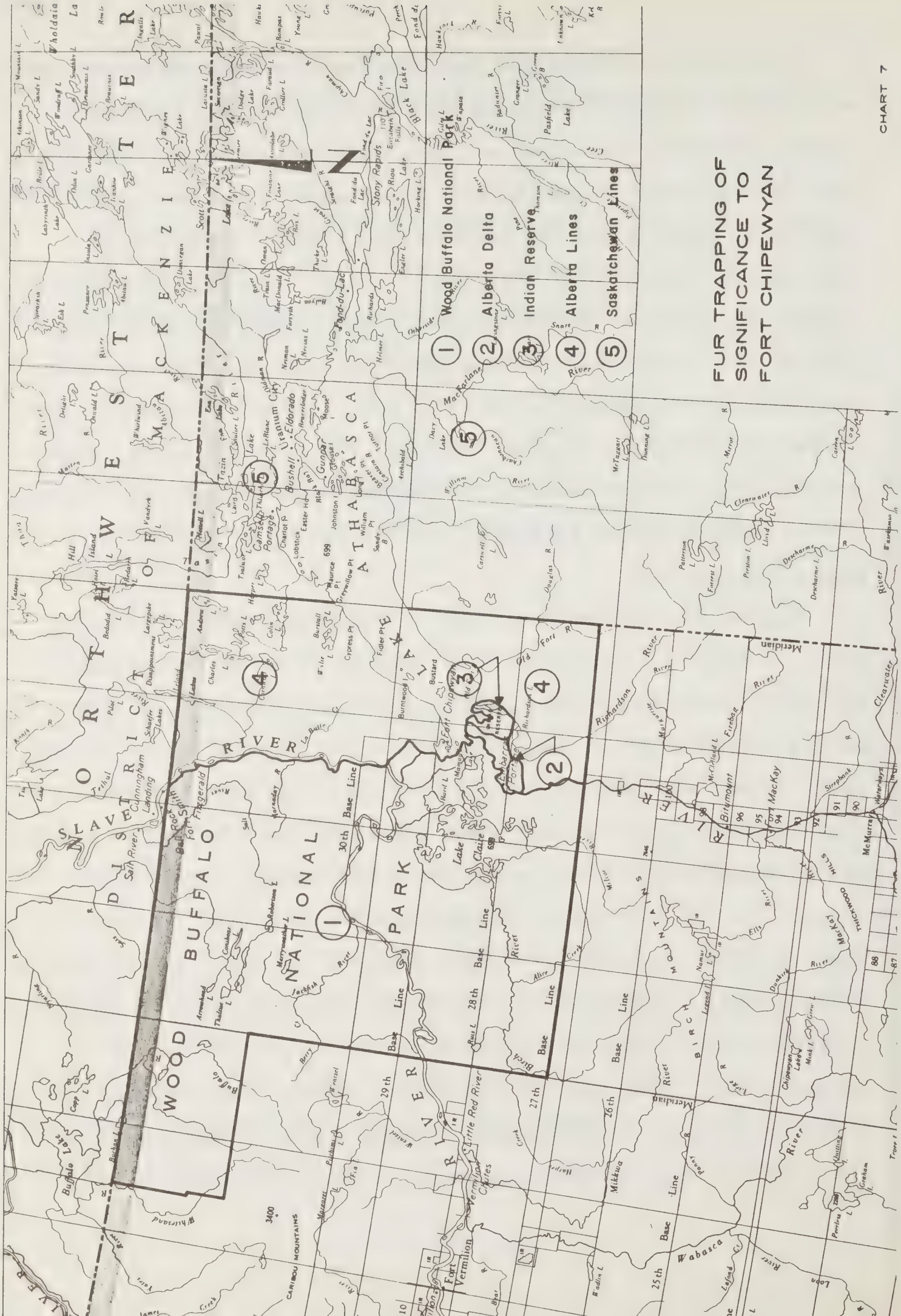
It is not proposed here to document the nature of the fur trapping process, the structure of the registered trap lines both in the Wood Buffalo Park and in Alberta, and the manner in which the fur resource is managed by the Federal and Provincial Governments, as this would not serve any particular purpose within this report. We propose, rather, to focus on impact, for trapping and for the various other economic activity categories to be reviewed.

Reliable data on numbers of active trappers, pelts taken, production of various trap lines, and prices paid is not available. In order that the fur resource be properly managed in the future much improved data will have to be available. Efforts are being made, however, they cannot be made too fast and the accurate collection and compilation of such data should be a priority item for the Province of Alberta.

Chart VII indicates the fur trapping areas for which we have endeavoured to gather trapping data relevant to Fort Chipewyan. Broadly speaking, the areas we have concerned ourselves with are the Fort Chipewyan trapping area of the Park, the Alberta lines, the Indian Reserve and the Saskatchewan lines. A variety of information sources have been used in order to piece together a reasonable analysis of the production and income data. These sources have included: 1) Department of Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division (Fur Dealer's Return of Pelts Purchased) 2) Canadian Wildlife Service, National and Historic Parks Branch, special studies and surveys, Statistics Canada, fur auction houses, Indian Affairs Branch personnel and various local people.

Number of trappers

Based upon the various types of trapping permits issued in 1969, in the Fort Chipewyan area, together with estimates from a variety of sources, there appears to be approximately 180 - 200 active trappers in the Fort Chipewyan area. By active, we would refer to men who have registered trap lines, or who work in conjunction with Head trappers under the Park "block system". A fairly careful count, directed toward the Treaty Indians was carried out in 1970 which revealed that at that time there were some 105 Treaty and 30 non-Treaty trappers operating in the Park, plus 24 Treaty Indians on Alberta lines, approximately 10 trapping in Saskatchewan, and up to a dozen on the Chipewyan Reserve. In reviewing the registered trap lines in Alberta, not held by the Treaties referred to above, there appear to be an additional 45, the majority held by Metis trappers resident in or around Fort



FUR TRAPPING OF
SIGNIFICANCE TO
FORT CHIPEWYAN

Chipewyan. Thus, as of 1970, the breakdown of trappers appears to be as shown in Table V.

TABLE V

	<u>Estimated</u>
Treaty (WBNP)	105
Non-Treaty (WBNP)	30
Treaty (Alberta Lines)	24
Treaty (Saskatchewan)	10
Treaty (Reserve 201)	12
Metis (Alberta Lines)	45
	<hr/>
Total	226

Naturally, the question as to what constitutes an active trapper immediately arises. What is the logical cut-off between a serious trapper and the casual, almost hobby trapper? This is a difficult question and one that should not be answered too hastily in an area of depressed income levels where \$250 (150 muskrat pelts) might amount to a very significant percentage of earned income for many people.

Based upon the Fur Dealers Return of Pelts Purchased, in 1969 a fairly large percentage of the area's trappers could be considered serious, or very serious. At least 75 trappers, including those active on the Reserve and in Saskatchewan produced in excess of \$500 gross. In 1970, it is indicated that 4 or 5 very good trappers from Fort Chipewyan spending most of the season on the lines in Saskatchewan, produced between \$2,000 and \$3,000 gross each, this

TABLE VI

Muskrat Production on the Park Delta
and Alberta as a whole
(1960/61 - 1969/70)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pelts Produced (000's)</u>			<u>Unit Value</u>	<u>Total Value (000 \$)</u>	
	<u>Park Delta</u>	<u>Alberta</u>	<u>% Delta</u>		<u>Park Delta</u>	<u>Alberta</u>
1960-61	91	229	40	.7	64	160
1961-62	35	236	15	.6	21	142
1962-63	32	252	13	1.0	32	252
1963-64	51	197	26	1.3	66	256
1964-65	61	179	34	1.2	73	214
1965-66	144	215	67	1.5	216	321
1966-67	-	(259) ⁽¹⁾	-	(1.6)	-	(423)
1967-68	44	259	17	.8	35	206
1968-69	38	132	29	1.3	50	172
1969-70	32	175	19	1.1	35	193
Total	528	1,874			592	1,916
9 Year Average	58	208			66	212

Source: Park Delta data based on special survey carried out by Federal and Provincial officials. Basically covers the area south of the Peace River, in the Park exclusively. Alberta data from Department of Lands and Forests and Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

(1) 1966-67 figures not included in totals.

considered to be very good. Despite the fairly significant numbers of trappers, who in 1970 grossed \$500 or more, it is indicated that in the season 1969-70, there may have been as few as a dozen Fort Chipewyan trappers operating in the Park that seriously worked toward the maximum production of their lines. According to the Indian Affairs agent at the time, only one trapper, to his knowledge grossed in excess of \$4,000 during this season.

Thus while it must be recognized that there may be less than a dozen Fort Chipewyan trappers who in the past several years have produced substantial income from trapping (i.e. \$2,500 or more) at the same time it is significant that there are in excess of 200 trappers, who are still active insofar as they do go out on the trap lines and supplement their income. The variety of factors which may be acting on this group to reduce the significance of this income source does not alter the fact that the trapping vocation still represents the dominant skill category of the estimated Fort Chipewyan male labor force of 367 (males between 16 - 64).

Production Prices and Income

As previously stated, there is a paucity of good information on fur production in Alberta. The best data, and the data which most fairly represents the production trends on the Delta related to water level changes, originates from a survey of the Athabasca Delta portion of the Wood Buffalo National Park. Table VI shows the production of muskrat in the area together with Alberta's total muskrat production for the ten years 1960-61/1969-70.

Muskrat has traditionally been the cash crop on the Delta, both within and outside the Park. Over the period shown, the Park

TABLE VII

Muskrat Production in the Alberta

Portion of the Athabasca Delta

(1966-67/1970-71)

1966-67	697
1967-68	4,119
1968-69	3,575
1969-70	3,588
1970-71	3,558
	<hr/>
Average	3,100
	<hr/>

portion of the Delta produced an average of \$66,000 annual income or some 30% of the Alberta total. This percentage has ranged, however, from as low as 13% to as high as 67% and has been far more erratic than the overall Alberta situation. Reliable data on muskrat production outside of the Park portion of the Delta is basically not available. Information based on the Fur Dealer Returns of Pelts Purchased, these being in the files of the Department of Lands and Forests, are simply too incomplete to utilize effectively. However, two additional sources of information are presented here to add to the total income picture.

A study of the muskrat production in the Alberta portion of the Delta, covering the years 1966-67 to 1970-71 was carried out to complement the study of the Park area. Table VII presents the results of this study. The findings of this study would indicate that as far as muskrat go, the Alberta portion only enhances area muskrat production in a small way.

Naturally, the estimated 80 registered Alberta lines within the area shown in Chart VII add substantially to production of muskrat and other species. There is also some production on the Chipewyan Indian Reserve and the Saskatchewan lines.

An analysis of Fur Dealer Returns of Pelts Purchased was carried out for 1969. This covered all Fort Chipewyan trapping areas. While the data is not comparable to previously presented data, nor was it possible to define specifically the area covered, it has been presented in Table VIII because it is relevant to the overall picture we are developing. Here, the added importance which the beaver has assumed in the overall trapping picture is clear.

TABLE VIII

Number and Value of Pelts Taken
in the Fort Chipewyan Area

(1969)

	<u>No. of Pelts</u>	<u>Average Value</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
Beaver	2,075	16.84	34,943
Ermine	426	.73	310
Fox	71	13.75	976
Lynx	75	27.05	2,028
Marten	4	10.00	40
Mink	262	12.17	3,188
Muskrat	11,416	1.25	14,270
Otter	20	23.27	465
Squirrel	6,278	.46	2,887
Wolf/Coyote	205	13.12	2,689
Fisher	11	12.28	135
Bear	8	24.76	198
			<hr/>
			\$62,133
			<hr/>

Source: Department of Lands and Forests -
Fur Dealer's Return of Purchases

TABLE IX

Number of Pelts and Value of All Species
taken in Park Portion of the Delta

(1967 - 1969)

	<u>Muskrat</u>	<u>Beaver</u>	<u>Mink</u>	<u>Squirrel</u>	<u>Other</u> ⁽¹⁾	<u>Total</u>
<u>1967-68</u>						
Pelts (000)	44	.765	.215	9.7		
Price	.8	15.0	13.5	.5		
Total Value (000 \$)	35.0	11.5	2.8	4.9	.8	55.0
<u>1968-69</u>						
Pelts (000)	38	.726	.405	6.2		
Price	1.25	16.1	12.2	.5		
Total Value (000 \$)	47.2	12.2	4.9	2.8	6.8	74.0
<u>1969-70</u>						
Pelts (000)	33	.721	.680	1.4		
Price	1.1	13.3	11.1	.3		
Total Value (000 \$)	35.4	9.5	7.5	.4	4.6	57.6
3 Year Average	\$39.2	\$11.2	\$5.2	\$2.6	\$3.8	\$62.0

(1) Lynx, Ermine, Otter, Coyote and Fox

Insofar as it has already been established (see Table VI) that in the Park portion of the Delta alone in 1969, some 32,000 muskrats were taken, the data presented in Table VIII is clearly low, insofar as the overall area is concerned.

Table IX presents some additional production and income data from the same special survey which provided the basis for Table VI.

The foregoing random information is intended to provide background for the conclusions regarding the past and current economic impact of trapping in the Fort Chipewyan area. These conclusions are necessarily based on qualitative information and opinions as well as the limited quantitative data we have been able to assemble.

Conclusions

While there appear to be some 226 trappers in the Fort Chipewyan area (61% of the male labor force) as few as 10 - 15% can be considered as full season, serious, productive trappers. Unquestionably, water levels have reduced the productive capability of many Delta lines below the point where it is worth going out. However, there is considerable evidence that many additional social factors have also reduced the level of trapping effort. A reversal in this trend could be very beneficial to the economy of Fort Chipewyan.

Based on the 1960-1970 data available, muskrat production is clearly in a downward trend. In the Park portion of the Delta it appears to be down some 40% from the average 3 year groupings which prevailed during the decade. The anticipated low harvest in 1970-71 could point to a continued slide. At the same time, no evidence would point to any particular trend in the other important species, these being beaver and mink. Within the Park portion of the Delta

these species have either held their own or shown increased production during recent years. There is nothing which indicates that the non-Delta trapping areas in the Fort Chipewyan area, these being at a much greater distance from the Town, are potentially less productive than they have been in the past. One further interesting point is that muskrat production in the Alberta portion of the Delta has not shown any decrease during the past three years (Table VII) which may be due to greater trapper productivity.

The economic impact on Fort Chipewyan, in the form of trapper income, is on a definite decline, although it has not been possible to specifically chart this. It is clear, however, that far fewer families are being supported by and relying on the avails of trapping. Very few trappers, even those very good trappers producing as much as \$3,000 a year, are able to maintain an average-sized family of six without supplementing his income through welfare, or in some other manner. The concentrated, fall and spring, manner in which the income is actually produced aggravates this situation greatly.

As of 1970, the income generated by trapping in the Fort Chipewyan area is estimated to be as shown in Table X.

TABLE X

Estimated Income from Trapping
in Fort Chipewyan in (1960-61/1969-70)

<u>Category</u>	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1964/65</u>	<u>1967/68</u>	<u>1969/70</u>
Saskatchewan Lines	30.0	25.0	20.0	15.0
Park Delta (South of Peace River)	86.0	83.0	56.0	57.6
Alberta Lines (Delta and other)	51.0	50.0	36.0	37.0
Indian Reserve	30.0	20.0	10.0	3.0
Other (South-west, Park north of Peace River, etc.)	25.0	20.0	15.0	10.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	222.0	198.0	137.0	122.6
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Several assumptions have been utilized here. The Saskatchewan lines income production trend is based upon the trapper activity reported during the period. The Park Delta is based upon actual muskrat values, plus an assumed constant level of \$22,000 for other species. The Alberta lines amounts to 60% of the Park Delta totals for 1960-61 and 1964-65, and 65% for the last two periods. The higher levels in the latter years allows for the fact that the Alberta lines are less dependent on the muskrat. Also, the 60% figure is in line with the trapper numbers in and out of the Park (See Table V). The Indian Reserve is based upon the reported trapper activity, as is the Other category. A \$122,000 in gross trapping income, a 45% reduction from 1960-61 is evident. Average gross income per trapper is approximately \$500. However, if one

makes the reasonable assumption that there are ten trappers earning \$2,500 and an additional 20 earning \$1,000, the remaining 216 trappers produce \$77,000, or only \$280 each.

Finally, it must not be assumed, when dealing with gross trapping income that it can be equated directly with personal income. There is certainly some cost to trapping, whether it is gas for the snowmobile or food for the dogs. Also, purchases of trapping equipment and supplies. For the purposes of this study, we have reduced the gross income levels by 10% to obtain personal incomes.

COMMERCIAL FISHING

The commercial fishery in Lake Athabasca as a whole, shared by Alberta and Saskatchewan, has been rather sporadic over the years and is presently at a generally low ebb. Most of the Canadian freshwater fishing industry's problems are to be found in the Lake Athabasca situation. Among these problems are:

- 1) High freight costs.
- 2) Relatively low and inconsistent returns to producers.
- 3) Inadequate harvesting equipment.
- 4) Need for producer training.
- 5) Inadequate management at the local level.
6. Poor communication between technological, government and producer sectors.
7. Inadequate knowledge of the fish resource itself.
8. Need for product and market development.
9. Need for revised regulations.

The recently developed Freshwater Fish Marketing Board may improve this situation, however, such effects have not yet reached the Lake Athabasca area.

The Lake Athabasca fishery has always been divided into a Saskatchewan fishery and an Alberta (Delta) fishery, the latter based out of Fort Chipewyan. The Saskatchewan fishery has always been of greater significance, although the significance of fishing and processing in the Alberta end was formerly of much greater significance than it is now.

No attempt will be made here to describe the Lake Athabasca fishery in terms other than past and present impact. Commercial fishing operations in the Alberta end of the lake began in 1943 and the area has been fished commercially in 18 of the years since that time, none having been carried out in 1946, 1947, 1949, 1953 and 1956. However, McInnes Products, one of the two companies active over the years on the lake, had been fishing the Saskatchewan portion since the 1920's. Canadian Fish Producers established a goldeye fishery on Lake Claire in 1954 and on Lake Athabasca in 1960. Tables XI and XII summarize the fishery statistics for the Alberta and Saskatchewan portions of the lake for the years 1960-70.

In addition, an average of 120,000 pounds of walleye was taken out of Richardson Lake near Fort Chipewyan during the years 1963-66. The goldeye fishery produced some 26,000 pounds from the Alberta portion of Lake Athabasca between 1960-63. The goldeye fishery on Lake Claire and Lake Mamawi during these years totalled some 90,000 pounds.

Virtually no Fort Chipewyan area fishermen participate in the Saskatchewan fishery, this being dominated by fishermen and plant

TABLE XII

Fish Production on Saskatchewan

Portion of Lake Athabasca

(1960 - 1970)

(000's of lbs.)

	<u>Walleye</u>	<u>Pike</u>	<u>Trout</u>	<u>Whitefish</u>	<u>Landed Value</u>	\$ (000) <u>Market Value</u>
1960	19.9	12.2	764.0	466.4	87	227
1961	24.2	24.6	847.5	577.4	100	453
1962	30.0	-	681.4	611.5	88	303
1963	31.0	23.3	509.6	814.4	88	278
1964	31.6	45.9	552.6	642.0	90	248
1965	35.5	37.2	440.1	929.2	101	201
1966	14.9	26.9	423.3	882.5	105	184
1967	29.6	16.2	263.9	687.4	77	155
1968	66.0	53.3	263.7	458.9	67	135
1969	37.0	46.4	171.9	651.8	88	176
1970	N/A	92.0	370.7	638.2	N/A	N/A

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics
 Department of Natural Resources
 Province of Saskatchewan.

employees from Stony Rapids and Fond du Lac, and even some fishermen from Lake Winnipeg. The McInnes processing facilities have traditionally been at Crackingstone Point and although the McInnes organization has been going through difficulties, a relationship with Co-operative Fisheries Limited of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan was in the process of being worked out during the preparation of this report. This would ensure the continuation of the Saskatchewan end fishery and expanded processing facilities, at the new Gunnar site.

The whitefish, pike and coarse fish potential of the Alberta end of the Lake, if in fact it exists at all, has never been exploited. The whitefish are infected with the cyst common to that species, prices for pike have been too low and economic markets for the plentiful coarse fish have not existed. The goldeye fishery was cancelled due to a sharp drop in the abundance of that species. It has, therefore, been a walleye fishery and will probably continue in this manner for at least some time in the future.

Employment and Income

During the late 1960's the impact of commercial fishing on Fort Chipewyan began to get very small. In the summer of 1968, only McInnes Products was buying fish on the lake. Only one Treaty Indian and one Metis fisherman from Fort Chipewyan participated. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the mid-1960's when a goodly percentage of the 55 fishermen working for McInnes Products were local people from Fort Chipewyan.

In 1964, the highest year for Alberta walleye production in the 10 year period 1960-70, the total value of the catch to McInnes fishermen was \$35,000, of which according to the author of the

report from which this data was obtained, it is unlikely that more than 1/3 was earned by residents of the area. (Lake Athabasca in Alberta, D. G. McDonald, 1965) An additional \$5,000 was apparently earned by local people in that year through contracts with Canadian Fish Producers Ltd.

The other dimension of the commercial fishing operations in the area has been processing. In 1964, there were 40 - 45 people, primarily from the area, working for McInnes Products over the summer season. An additional 1/2 dozen worked for Canadian Fish at their plant. Filleters were on contract at \$1.75 per 100 lbs. and it is reported that as much as \$2,000 was earned during the season by the better filleters. There are no processing facilities in the Fort Chipewyan area now, excepting the freezer barge stationed at The Willows, across the Lake from Fort Chipewyan. Fish are received at the barge for shipment to Saskatchewan facilities for processing.

Lack of data regarding the actual participation of Fort Chipewyan area people in the commercial fishery and processing operations over the years makes it impossible to develop a profile of the income earned over the years. Clearly, however, it was a substantial source of income for both men and women during the 1950's and early 1960's. At present, the impact is virtually nil.

A local co-operative, the Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative, was started in 1968, but did not begin to actually function until 1970. The spring fishery in that year was interrupted by the Great Canadian Oil Sands oil spill, with compensation of approximately \$40,000 accruing directly to the co-operative and its 26 members. The 1971 fishery was fraught with various organizational and weather difficulties and did not really materialize. The co-operative is

now gearing up for the 1972 season with the aid of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board and various government departments.

FORESTRY

Logging and sawmill operations, as well as firefighting to a minor extent, has for many years been a major provider of employment and income. Chart VIII indicates the location of existing and proposed forestry operations, as well as the three major blocks of merchantable spruce found within the Park.

Production and Income

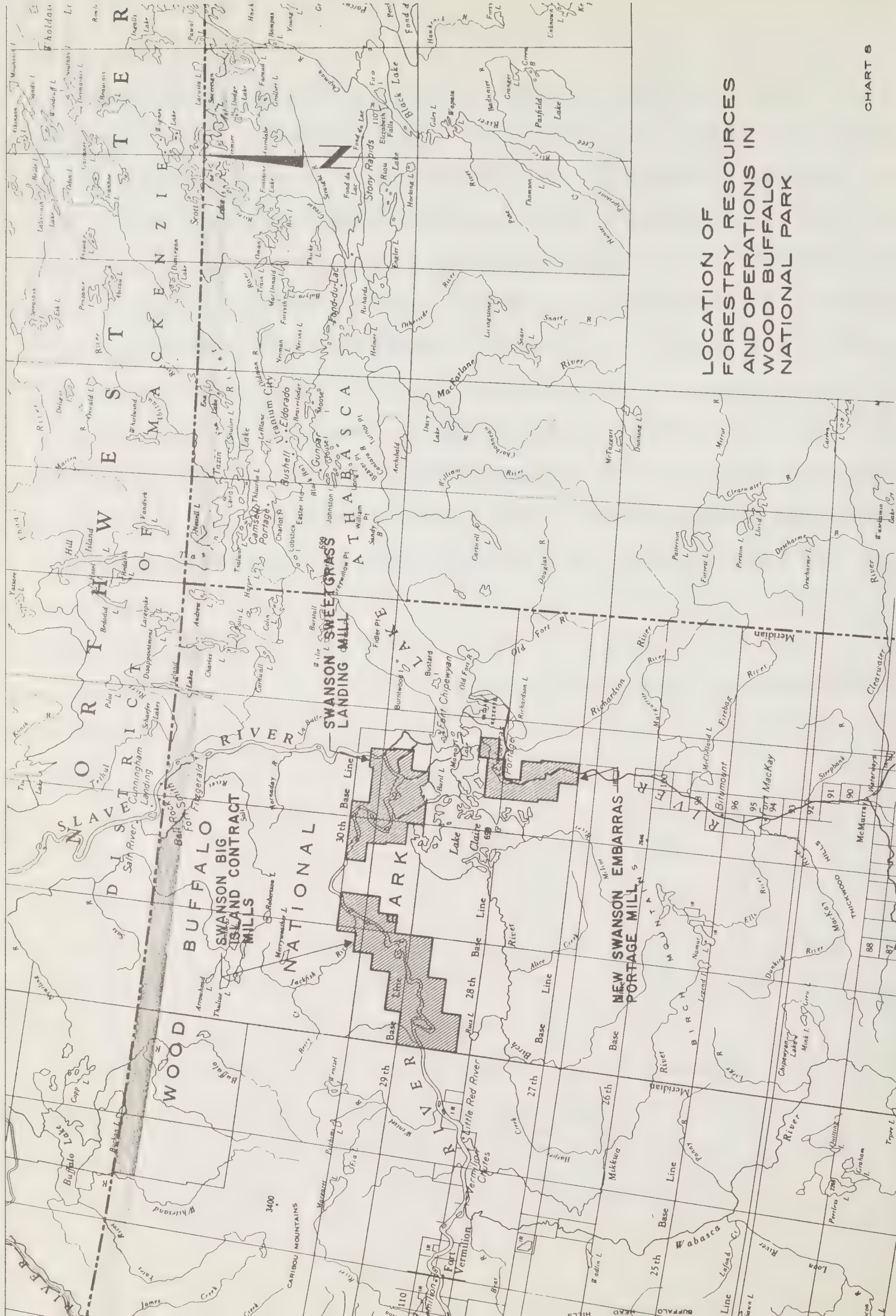
Over the past decade and more, forestry has been the second most significant income source for Fort Chipewyan area people, next to trapping. In some years it has probably rivalled trapping and may well have provided a somewhat more stable economic base than trapping as a result of the cash income earned over an extended period of time.

Timber cutting began in the Park along the Peace River in 1951 for Eldorado Mining and Refining Ltd., followed by Swanson Lumber Company of Edmonton in 1955 and Denny Logging of Fort Smith in 1957. The Park Lumber Co. operated on the Athabasca River between 1955 - 1958 and then closed. Up to and including 1960 - 1961, when the Eldorado mill burned down, a total of 94 million feet had been cut. No specific data is available, however, it is certain that considerable employment and wage benefits accrued to the well dispersed population of the overall Fort Chipewyan area.

Although less than 5% of the area of the Wood Buffalo Park contains merchantable timber, the Swanson Lumber Company has maintained very substantial logging, milling and planing operations in the Park throughout the years. This Company presently has a

rough lumber mill at Sweetgrass Landing (15,000 M fbm) and two contract mills in the Garden River/Big Island area at the west side of the Park. Formerly, the lumber produced at Sweetgrass was planed at that site thus providing a year round operation. The planer unit was moved to Fort McMurray in 1968. Lumber produced at the two other mills is finished at Swanson's High Level facilities. Traditionally, sawmill and logging employees for Sweetgrass Landing have come from the Fort Chipewyan area, although the majority of supervisory staff has been and continues to be brought in from outside. The Indian Reserves to the west of the Park provide the bulk of wage employees for the other 2 mills. It is understood that the Bands in this area have recently acquired timber berths west of the Park boundary.

Table XIII outlines the lumber production which was recorded in the Park during the period 1959 - 1970.



LOCATION OF
FORESTRY RESOURCES
AND OPERATIONS IN
WOOD BUFFALO
NATIONAL PARK

TABLE XIII

Lumber Production in Wood Buffalo National Park

(1955 - 1970)

	<u>Total Cut (F.B.M.)</u>
1959 - 1964	40 Million
1955 - 1964	44 "
1965	11 "
1966	15 "
1967	22 "
1968	22 "
1969	27 "
1970	25 "
<hr/>	
Total	206 Million
21 Year average	9.6 Million
Average 1965 - 1970 (6 years)	20.3 Million

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,
National and Historic Parks Branch.

Reliable data has been obtained directly from the wage records of the Swanson Lumber Company in order to specifically assess the impact of this industry on Fort Chipewyan. Table XIV indicates the numbers and origin of the labor force at Sweetgrass Landing during the period 1967 - 1970. Table XV summarizes the wages earned for the same period.

TABLE XIV

Numbers and Place of Residence of
Sweetgrass Landing non-supervisory employees
of the Swanson Lumber Company
(1967 - 1970)

<u>Stated Residence on T-4 Tax Slip</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
Fort Chipewyan	71)) 60%	54)) 69%	31)) 84%	65)) 65%
Sweetgrass Landing	67)	70)	136)	11)
Other (Fox Lake, Fort Vermilion, Fort Smith, Edmonton, etc.)	91) 40%	55) 31%	32) 16%	41) 35%
	229	179	199	117

Source: Swanson Lumber Company

Special allowance was not made in Table XIV for the employees of the logging contractors (Bourque in 1967 - 1968 and Reason 1969 - 1970) however, it is felt that most of the men, with a few exceptions, also worked for Swanson in the same year. The wage income has been included in the income figures of Table XV.

TABLE XV

Income earned by employees of
Swanson Lumber Company Sweetgrass Landing Mill

(1967 - 1970)

(000's of \$)

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
<u>Non-supervisory</u>				
Fort Chipewyan/Sweetgrass	179	190	205	104
Other	84	67	52	52
Logging Contractor	20	16	17 (est.)	17 (est)
<u>Supervisory</u>				
Fort Chipewyan/Sweetgrass	20 (est.)	20	19	10
Other	225 (est.)	253	296	332
Total Fort Chipewyan/Sweetgrass and Logging Contractor	219	226	241	131
Total Other	309	320	348	384
Total	519	546	589	515

Source: Swanson Lumber Company

The very substantial impact of logging and lumber production on the Fort Chipewyan people is clearly set out in Tables XIV and XV. At the same time the sharply reduced number of employees and income earned by local people in 1970 does not point to a promising future. This is particularly true in view of the stated desire of the National Parks Branch to eliminate the practice of lumbering from the

Wood Buffalo Park completely.

Presently the National Parks Branch are negotiating with the Swanson Lumber Company for an exchange of timber cutting rights in the Wood Buffalo Park. This involves the surrender by the Company of its right to cut mature, over-mature, damaged or dead timber on Timber Berths Numbers 378,396 and the east part of Timber Berth Number 408. These comprise approximately 92 square miles. In return, the Department will grant the Company, for a period of eight years, permission to cut mature, over-mature, damaged or dead timber within an area composed of approximately 55 square miles located at about $111^{\circ}27'$ - $111^{\circ}38'$ West Longitude and $58^{\circ}14'$ - $58^{\circ}21'$ North Latitude on the west bank of the Athabasca River. (See Chart VIII)

These negotiations are presently going on and the Swanson Lumber Company appears anxious for the Government of Canada's policy to be made clear. The Company's preference is to remain at the Sweetgrass Landing location, and trade the present berth for an alternative berth not readily visible from the road and closer to the mill. After many years of losing money on the Sweetgrass operation, the Company apparently feels that they can operate profitably in the present mill location, with its special conditions. There will be a considerable cost to Swanson in effecting a relocation to the Embarras area. It is difficult to predict the impact of the mill's relocation on the local people. However, although the distance is no greater, there is a possibility that accessibility from Fort Chipewyan will be reduced for those providing their own transportation, or wanting to go back and forth on a regular basis.

The long drawn out Cree Indian Band land entitlement negotiations, which show no sign of being concluded, have some possible implications for forestry, as one of their main objectives is to obtain timber cutting privileges in the Park. It appears unlikely to the writer that new cutting rights will be allowed over and above the present commitments to Swanson. At the same time, there is certainly economic potential in pursuing the matter, as long as the proper recognition is given to the need for highly competent management. A formal relationship between the Bands and Swanson Lumber in a forestry operation is a possibility which requires further study.

Firefighting

One other dimension of forestry affecting the Fort Chipewyan area people is firefighting for the Alberta Government and the Wood Buffalo Park. While not highly significant in overall dollar terms, it provides useful short-term income during the summer. Table XVI summarizes the area of activity.

TABLE XVIFirefighting Statistics for Fort Chipewyan Crews

	<u>Total Wages</u> (000's of \$)
1961	15.8
1962	NIL
1963	10.3
1964	.3
1965	1.3
1966	-
1967	.8
1968	.7
1969	14.9
1970	18.4
	<hr/>
Total	62.5
	<hr/>

Source: Alberta Forest Service.

As shown, in only 4 years of the 10 were significant wage levels reached. 1971 was a year of heavy forest fire activity throughout the spring and summer and probably will exceed the \$20,000 level by a considerable amount. Including only the years 1960 - 1970, a total of some \$62,000 was earned, or an average of \$6,200 per year. The average hourly wage paid during this period was \$1.25. Normally a 25 man crew is used, covering fire areas in the area, the Park and south to the Fort McMurray area.

TABLE XVII
Federal and Provincial Government
Employment of Local and Transient Persons in 1970

	Number of Employees		Man-Months Produced		Estimated Income Produced (000 \$)		Emp.	Totals	
	L	T	L	T	L	T		Man-Months	Income
<u>Federal</u>									
Dept. of Indian Affairs	3 (M)	-	36	-	14.4	-	3	36	14.4
Ministry of Transport	-	5 (M)	-	60	-	50.0	5	60	50.0
Health and Welfare	2 (F)	4 (F)	24	48	6.0	28.8	6	72	34.8
R. C. M. P.	-	2 (M)	-	24	-	19.2	2	24	19.2
Post Office	2.5	-	30	-	12.0	-	2.5	30	12.0
National Parks	1 (M)	1 (M)	12	12	6.0	9.6	2	24	15.6
Dept. of Public Works	3 (M)		15		20.0		3	15	20.0
Sub Total	11.5	12.0	117	144	58.4	107.6	23.5	261	166.0
<u>Provincial</u>									
Lands and Forests	2 (M)	2 (M)	24	24	12.0	20.0	4	48	32.0
Education (Both Schools)	4 (2M) (2F)	15	48	150	19.0	127.0	19	198	146.0
Local (Utilities)	.5	-	6	-	2.4	-	.5	6	2.4
Total	18.0	29.0	195	318	91.8	254.6	47	513	346.4

Source: Local survey of departments.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

In Northern Canada, government is a very major economic factor. Works projects, regular employment and social assistance make up a very large part of the economic picture. Fort Chipewyan is certainly no exception.

Both Federal and Provincial departments are represented within the study area, primarily at Fort Chipewyan. Table XVII lists these departments and the estimated number of employees, man-month totals and income produced in 1970.

Reliable data is not available for previous years, although the present level of income from government employment for local people (\$91,000) is probably up modestly from levels which existed in 1965 and previously.

The figures shown in Table XVII do not reflect the Alberta Newstart operation which has been shut down.

Local people represent 38% of government employees; they account for 38% of the man-months of government employment in the area; and, they earn 26% of the total government wages. Local people earned some \$92,000 from government employment, this representing an average of \$466 per month.

BARGING AND GENERAL TRANSPORTATION

Employment in transportation along the Athabasca and Slave Rivers and Lake Athabasca waterways has been a traditional source of employment and income for local people. More recently, Pacific Western Airlines have operated a scheduled airline service into the study area, with this having some rather limited actual local impact on employment.

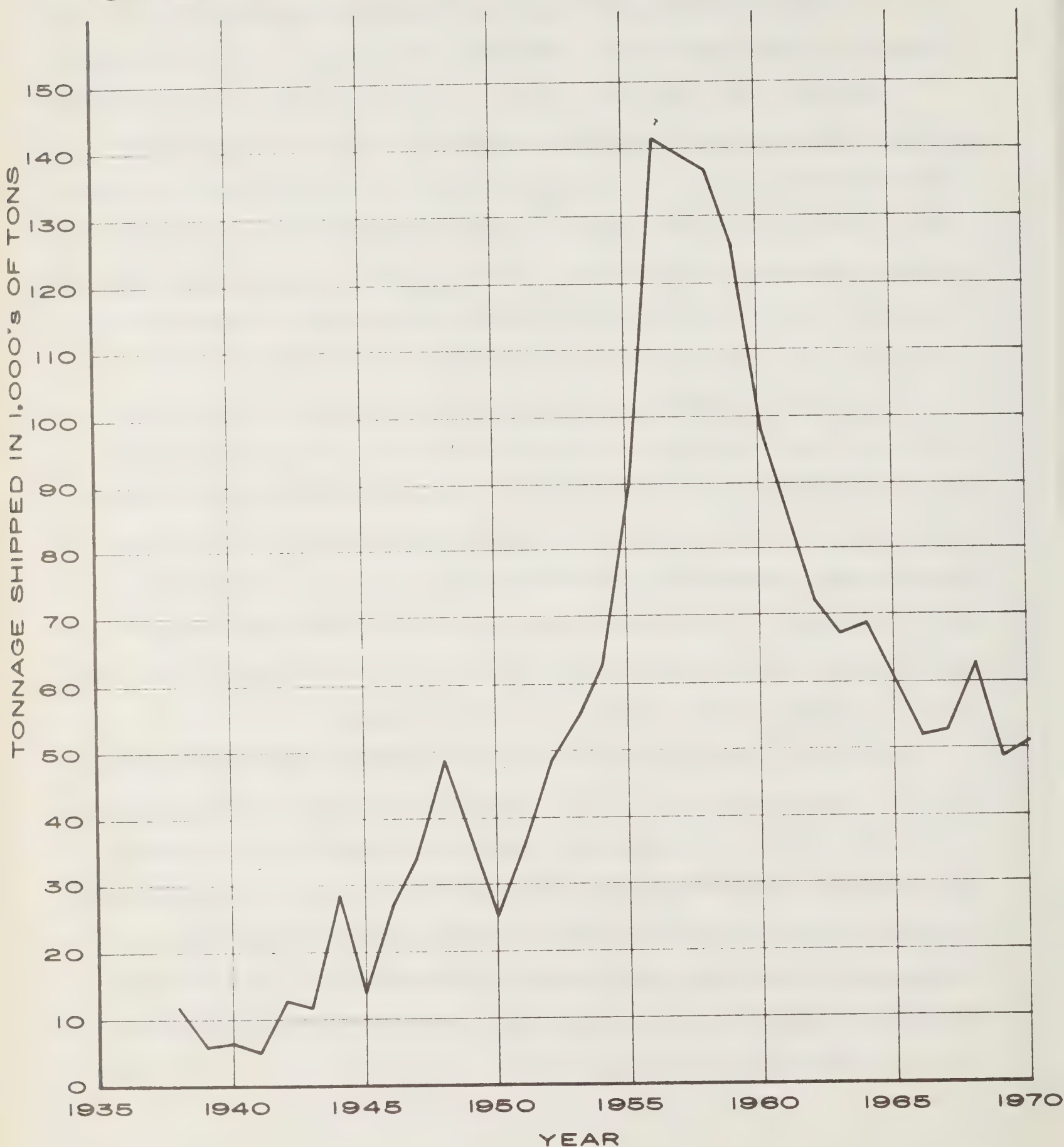
Transportation activity from Waterways north on the Athabasca began in earnest around the early 1930's. Mining activity provided the main impetus. During this period 5 companies, including Northern Transportation Ltd., the present operators, were in business.

Spurred by the post-war interest in the uranium industry, tonnage on the Athabasca River increased sharply in 1946 and with the exception of a sharp drop in 1950, continued to rise steadily until about 1955, at which time this general trend reversed itself. (Chart IX) Reduced mining activity and the reduced overall importance of the Athabasca portion of the river system were the basic reason for this decrease.

As of 1970, the barging system is at a rather low level of activity. New mines are one possibility which could reverse this trend. However, this is improbable in the immediate future, while a fairly good possibility for the medium and long-term. In the meantime the two barges of Northern Transportation Ltd. will continue to ply the Athabasca and Peace Rivers with cargoes of lumber and fish going south and supplies and fuel going north. Air-freight has taken over all higher value, delivery sensitive cargo.

Presently, there are no Fort Chipewyan area people employed by Northern Transportation Ltd. in connection with the two vessels operating out of Fort McMurray. Apparently, there is an ample supply of deckhands in Fort McMurray. However, in the past it was a common practice for the vessel captains to pick up deckhands from Fort Chipewyan in the event they sailed short-handed from Fort McMurray. There also appears to have been less interest and no applications from Fort Chipewyan in the past year.

TOTAL TONNAGE HANDLED ON ATHABASCA RIVER 1938 - 1970



It would appear that in the not too distant past as many as 6 - 10 men obtained employment during the barging season, producing an estimated maximum of \$8 - 10,000 in wages.

MINING AND EXPLORATION

Mining and the related exploration and development is a traditional producer of income and employment in the north and the local people of the Fort Chipewyan area have felt the impact of this industry, though certainly to a very limited extent.

The Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. mine at Uranium City, Saskatchewan, is the only producing mine in or adjacent to the study area. The massive Great Canadian Oil Sands operation is the only other mineral-based industry of significance in the area. Mokta (Canada) Ltd., a French exploration company is actively searching for uranium in the general area south of Lake Athabasca (the Carswell Lake region, some 60 miles south-east of Fort Chipewyan).

In the past there has been a widely varying level of wage employment held by Fort Chipewyan area people, all of the unskilled type. They have worked in the various mines which formerly operated at Uranium City; they took work in connection with the development of Great Canadian Oil Sands; and they took casual work with the various exploration companies and related government departments active in the area.

However, the current picture reveals virtually no employment in this type of work. Out of a total work force at Eldorado which has averaged 600 between 1966 and 1970, only a total of 72 man-months of employment was held by Fort Chipewyan people, this producing an estimated \$40,000 total income, or \$8,000 per year. There are none employed presently from Fort Chipewyan.

It is indicated that there are no people from Fort Chipewyan presently employed at Great Canadian Oil Sands, though opportunities could exist.

Mokta (Canada) Ltd. indicate that in 1971; due to a shortage of available manpower in the communities from which they have traditionally hired men (Fond du Lac, Uranium City), several men from Fort Chipewyan were taken on. From an original level of 6, the number still employed had dropped to 2 by August, 1971. The job to be done involves line cutting and carrying geophysical equipment. Mokta (Canada) Ltd. state that they could employ up to 12 native people from Fort Chipewyan, from May through September, at the expense of other regional native communities. However, the Company reports that despite good pay and good food, most of their employees only stay a few weeks. During the summer, the men are often taken away in fire crews, while home on an authorized and regular holiday.

As of 1971, from the standpoint of employment and income, there would appear to be a maximum generation of 3 man years, producing an estimated \$15,000, from the mining and related area.

LOCAL SERVICES AND BUSINESSES

Fort Chipewyan is the business and service centre for the study area. A number of businesses exist, producing a fairly significant amount of employment, most of it of the casual or part-time type. Table XVIII summarizes the types of businesses which exist, as well as the estimated employment and wages they produce.

There appears to be approximately 40 jobs in this category, 37 of them held by local people. The 290 man-months of employment are estimated to produce \$150,000 on an annual basis. Naturally

TABLE XVIII

Estimated Employment and Wages Produced by
Fort Chipewyan Services and Businesses (1970-71)

	Employees		Man-Months		Total Income Generated	
	L	T	L	T	L (000)	T
2 Retail Stores	3	-	36		10.8	
	6	1	72	12	21.6	10.0
6 Taxis (Individual Cars)	6		N/A	N/A	10.0	
2 Motels	2	-	24		7.2	-
	2	-	26		7.8	-
Movie Theatre	-				.3	
Laundromat	1		12		1.5	
Construction Company	2		15		12.0	
2 Pool Halls	-	-	-	-	2.0	
2 Garages	N/A				N/A	
Gasoline Sales	1		12		10.0	
Bulk Oil Sales	-	1		12		6.0
Handicraft Guild	-	-	-	-	.5	
2 Water Wagons	2				2.0	
Firewood Sales	3		9		15.0	
Skiff Building					2.5	
Trucking Service	2		12		3.0	
Fish Sales	3				1.0	
Utilities (Electric)	1.5	1		12	6.7	8.0
Restaurant	3	-	36		15.0	
Sub Total	37.5	3	254	36	129.9	24.0
Total	(40.5)		(290)		(153.9)	

L - Local resident T - Non-permanent/transient
Source: Local observations and interviews.

it is very difficult to be precise here.

The information shown in Table XVIII represents estimated wage income only. Profits which undoubtedly accrue in the case of the restaurants, taxis, bulk oil, theatre, etc., are obviously in addition to these wages.

It would be misleading to simply compute and state the annual income of the people working in the various Fort Chipewyan businesses. As shown in Table XVIII, this would amount to \$3,400 per year. However, the true picture can only be developed by eliminating the gasoline sales and restaurant operated by one family. Having eliminated this income and employment, the remaining \$104,000 produces an average of \$3,100 per year for the 33 individuals employed. Further eliminating the \$15,000 gross income generated by the three individuals cutting and selling firewood, the remaining \$89,000 would produce \$2,950 per year or \$248 per month for the remaining 30. Assuming a 40 hour week, this works out to \$1.55 per hour, a rather marginal return.

Thus, while this segment of the local economy makes a significant gross contribution to the economic well being of some 3 dozen people and perhaps 2 dozen families, the return from the effort expended is quite low and in only a few situations is it up to what would be considered the subsistence level of a family dependent on this income source.

Little or no management takes place in connection with any of the local businesses and in most instances there is no competition. There are no trends evident which will change the overall nature of the local business scene in the near future, the one exception to

this being to increase the economic benefits to local enterprises of the continuation of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project and the related works projects.

TOURISM

Little or no tourism has taken place within the study area up to this point in time, although much potential exists in the future. Some fly-in sport fishing has taken place in the north-east corner of Alberta, however, little or no local benefit has accrued. A resort area is located at Pine Lake in the Wood Buffalo Park. This is primarily a lease-cottage proposition serving the Fort Smith area. A floating houseboat capable of accomodating some 12 - 16 persons operates on a sporadic basis from the east end of the Lake. It is indicated that this U. S. owned facility only operated 2 months in 1971. Little or no wildfowl or big-game hunting has taken place on a tourism basis in the study area and any that has has certainly produced limited income for the study area. The potential of tourism and recreation in the area has either not yet been recognized, or if it has, nothing has yet been done about it. This area must be looked at very carefully as it is a key factor in the future of the area's economy.

AGRICULTURE

At present there is no land under cultivation except a few gardens at Fort Chipewyan, all of which appear to be developed by white, transient government employees. One garden appears to be approximately 1 acre and is reported productive of several root and other vegetable varieties.

At one time the Roman Catholic Mission raised potatoes on Potato Island across the bay from Fort Chipewyan. Land was broken by the Indian Affairs Branch at Dog Camp within the Park, and while a little gardening was done by the Cree Band in the first year, the area soon reverted to its natural state. Efforts have been made, always unsuccessful, by the Chipewyan Band to develop potato gardens on Reserve 201.

While the future agricultural potential of the area is obviously limited by a variety of factors, this area should also be looked at very carefully as there is probably possibilities for some development with proper research, training and management. Any progress in this area could produce substantial local benefits to a few families.

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of buildings, homes and other facilities has been rather limited over the past 10 years. Recently, an increase in housing construction has taken place (up to a dozen new units per year). This is expected to continue. An estimated 5 - 7 local men obtain fairly regular employment during the building season. Supervisory personnel comes in from centres such as St. Paul. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Metis Association, and the Alberta Housing Association are each involved in housing programs.

Local road construction and maintenance is carried out by the local contractor. Between 1 and 2 men are involved throughout the year.

Employment of local people in the various water control projects which will result from the findings of the hydrological studies presently underway should be possible and is certainly highly desirable.

HANDICRAFTS

This is not a significant area of income production, nor does it appear to have been in the past. As of May, 1971, the local Handicraft Guild had an inventory of some \$400, primarily in moose hide items such as mocassins, purses, etc. A display is maintained in the local airport, but very little merchandise sells. Difficulties have been experienced by the local Guild in marketing through the various channels, a common problem in this type of product. It is indicated that many ladies in Fort Chipewyan are capable of producing leather handicrafts. No other materials have been used in handicraft production to our knowledge.

It is generally estimated that between 250 and 300 moose may be taken annually in the overall area in which people from Fort Chipewyan hunt. Should this be the case, a potential income of some \$40,000 could be generated by handicraft production utilizing tanned moosehide. It is estimated by knowledgeable handicraft experts that between \$150 - \$175 should be anticipated per hide, if properly utilized. Obviously, the achievement of the maximum return involves producing a quality product and then marketing it properly and effectively through the right channels. Much more attention appears to be deserved in this area.

INDIAN BANDS

During the past two years, the Cree and Chipewyan Bands merged their operations from the management standpoint, having one Band Manager and an estimated 5 additional employees involved in the administration of social assistance, and other Band programs. It is estimated that some \$25,000 - \$30,000 in wages are generated in this area.

HUNTING AND FISHING FOR SUBSISTENCE AND SELF-CONSUMPTION

This area of activity has both cultural and economic significance. While over the decades the extent to which the local population has relied on taking meat and fish from the surrounding area has continually declined, it is still very significant today. It is probably not more than 25 years since a very high percentage of local food consumption was provided from the moose, fish and birds which could be taken. Today, the central location of almost all the people, together with the increasing importance of a money-type economy, has obviously reduced this percentage to a rather low level.

However, moose, fish, ducks and geese are taken regularly, and the meat of trapped fur species is used for both human and dog consumption. No estimates of the quantity or income-equivalent of the species taken has been attempted, nor is it felt to be required. However, both the cultural and economic importance of this activity area should be assigned considerable significance.

TEMPORARY OUTSIDE WAGE EMPLOYMENT

The population of the study area has, to highly varying degrees, supplemented the income which it has been able to produce from the areas discussed above with employment in a wide variety of "outside jobs". These have mostly been of a temporary nature in such centres as Yellowknife, Fort McMurray, Uranium City, Hay River, Fort Smith, High Level, Edmonton and northern Alberta in general. It is very difficult to assess the significance of this employment for the local economy, however, it is probably safe to say that very little of the income earned in such categories has found its way back into the local economy.

Jobs taken in Edmonton in connection with the 20 family Canada Manpower/Indian Affairs relocation project (1967 - 1968) were short-lived. Most families had grave financial and personal problems during their stay in Edmonton and returned to Fort Chipewyan.

Jobs taken in Fort McMurray with Great Canadian Oil Sands have not been successful, with relocation to Fort Chipewyan appearing to be almost universally the case.

Working away from Fort Chipewyan, while remaining resident in the home community, has simply not been a phenomena which has in any way become a reality. Mobility simply does not exist and has not existed in the past. This is of particular importance due to the fact that employment opportunities do and will continue to exist throughout the north at locations at which Fort Chipewyan people particularly those without dependents, are in the position to take advantage of.

TABLE XIX

Estimated Labor Force
in the Fort Chipewyan area

	<u>Population</u>	<u>16-64</u>	<u>Male portion (50%)</u>
Cree Indians	737	367	184
Chipewyan Indians	237	131	65
Metis	476	266	118
Total	1,450	764	367

Note: Local people only reflected here.

SECTION FIVE - ECONOMIC INDICATORS

In this section three major economic indicators will be examined concerning the status of Fort Chipewyan's economy. These are employment levels, personal income and levels of social assistance. Throughout the section we are dealing only with the Indian and Metis, purely local people and not with the primarily white, government employed transients.

EMPLOYMENT

Table XIX provides a breakdown of the estimated local labor force in the area. Out of a population of 1,450, some 764 are estimated to be between 16 - 64, with the male portion (assumed to be 50%) being 367.

Aside from the very few jobs available to women in the stores, the nursing station and restaurants, as well as some domestic work, there is a small, very limited amount of employment available to women in Fort Chipewyan. Lack of meaningful employment opportunity for women in similar communities has long been recognized as an important problem. The young girl leaving school finds no opportunity. The unmarried mother finds no opportunity. The mother of a young family finds it very difficult to supplement the family income. The older woman, whose family has grown up, also finds no opportunity.

Dealing with the male portion of the work force, and using the man-months or estimated man-month equivalents (as in the case of trapping income) shown in Chart VI, employment levels were assessed for 1965 and 1970. During this period, despite a considerable increase in the labor force, man-months of employment dropped from

TABLE XX

Estimated Productive Personal Income

Levels in Fort Chipewyan

(1965 and 1970)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>
Net Income to Local People from All Sources	633	552
Per Capita Income (1)	.526	.380
Per Capita Income excluding trapping	.378	.330

(1) 1,200 local population in 1965 and 1,450 in 1970.

1,501 to 1,255, a drop of some 12%. These levels represent 125 and 104 man-years respectively. Eliminating the trapping man-month equivalents, this leaves 1,051 and 985 months for 1965 and 1970 respectively. These levels represent 88 and 82 man-years respectively.

Thus, in terms of actual employment (that is, excluding the twice yearly trapping activity), a utilization level of 22% was achieved in 1970. Including the trapping, the level achieved was 29%. Data on the labor force in 1965 was not available, however, some growth has clearly taken place since then, therefore utilization was obviously considerably higher at that time.

Growth in the labor force, combined with disturbing downward trends in trapping, fishing and forestry, reveal a very poor current and short-term future employment picture. Unemployment and under-employment of the men and little or no meaningful job opportunities for women are apparent.

The seasonality of the major employment producing areas further complicates the picture insofar as much of the employment that does exist takes place in concentrated periods, the result being that there are many months in which labor force utilization is far below the indicated 20 - 30%.

The employment picture as described here has all the earmarks for poverty generation and high and rising welfare inputs.

PERSONAL INCOME LEVELS

Related to employment levels is the question of personal income levels. Table XX summarizes the impact of decreasing employment and rising unemployment. The 1965 average per capita level of earned

TABLE XXI

Total Social Assistance

Issued to Fort Chipewyan Area Residents

(1966/67 - 1970/71 with projection to March 31st, 1972)

	<u>Provincial</u>		<u>Federal</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Average #</u>	<u>Total \$</u>	<u>Average #</u>	<u>Total \$</u>	<u>Average #</u>	<u>\$</u>
	<u>of Persons</u>	<u>(000)</u>	<u>of Persons</u>	<u>(000)</u>	<u>of Persons</u>	
	<u>per Month</u>		<u>per Month</u>		<u>per Month</u>	
1966/67	70	19.3	530	79.8	600	99.1
1967/68	80	22.6	410	99.6	490	122.2
1968/69	110	33.3	380	99.5	490	132.9
1969/70	120	37.8	380	100.6	500	138.3
1970/71	118	51.6	400	99.6	518	151.2
1971/72 (est.)	160	76.2	540	140.0	700	216.0

Note: Estimates for 1971 - 72 were provided by the Departments concerned.

productive income of \$526 dropped to \$380 in 1970. When it is considered that the Alberta average per capita income level is in excess of \$2,400, this is clearly a poverty level by Provincial and National standards.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Social assistance, and various other transfer payments, from both Provincial and Federal sources supplement the earned income of the Fort Chipewyan area in a very major way. As in many other information areas, specific welfare dollar figures were very difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain. Table XXI summarizes the apparent levels of social assistance.

Assistance is obviously increasing, with a level of approximately 1/4 million anticipated for 1971/72. Assistance from the Provincial Government has increased some 300% over the 5 year period shown, this increase taking place at a very consistent annual rate. While assistance from Federal sources has increased approximately 80% during this period, the average number of persons benefiting from assistance has remained steady. This level of 540 does, however, cover roughly 55% of the Treaty Indian population. Obviously, when one considers the population growth which has taken place, a considerably higher average number of Treaty Indians, as a percentage of total population, were benefiting from assistance in the middle 1960's. It may well be that the transfer of responsibility to the Bands for actual administration and control of welfare funds has had a good effect.

In addition to social assistance, various other transfer payments are of significance, including family allowances, old age

pensions and unemployment insurance. As of 1970-71, it is estimated that Fort Chipewyan area families contained 600 children eligible for family allowances. We have assumed a \$7.00 monthly amount for all children 16 and under. This would produce \$50,000 on an annual basis.

An estimated 100 persons, as of 1971, qualify for old age security, this producing an additional \$96,000 income for the community, based on the \$80 per month formula for those over 65.

Unemployment insurance data was unavailable. A fair number of persons who have contributed under various government jobs and Swanson Lumber, probably do draw some income from this source.

Total transfer payments from the three areas discussed above total an estimated \$362,000 on an annual basis at the present time.

SECTION SIX - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURROUNDING ECONOMY

Although geographically isolated and extremely insular in a variety of ways, the community of Fort Chipewyan and its people must realistically be viewed against the background of a regional and even national society and economy in order to obtain the appropriate perspective. In this section, four dimensions of this broader perspective will be reviewed briefly.

ALBERTA AND CANADA AS A WHOLE

Throughout Canada as a whole, the north and Alberta, while there is presently considerable unemployment, there is at the same time a shortage of manpower in a variety of industries, skill categories and geographical areas. Thus training and mobility are essential for those who would otherwise not be employed. These two needs certainly apply now to Fort Chipewyan people and will continue to apply in the future. The achievement of desirable skill levels and the mobility to match is a difficult but essential task which must be faced.

In Northern Alberta, Northern British Columbia, Northern Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories major employment generating developments are presently moving ahead. More are on the drawing boards. Pulp mills, mines, pipelines, general construction, exploration, oil and gas projects are producing and will continue to produce a high level of demand for people capable of doing the work to be done. This work will cover the whole field from unskilled to highly skilled.

Only through appropriate training, education, sound vocational counselling and innovative, mobility increasing concepts will a

TABLE XXII

Statistical and General Information
Concerning Key Regional Communities

	<u>Fort McMurray</u>	<u>High Level</u>	<u>Fort Smith</u>	<u>Uranium City</u>
Population	7,000 (est.)	2,000	2,700	1,900
Trading Area Population	9,000 (est.)	7,000	3,650	2,147
(No. of Service (Businesses (47 (1969)	36	52	36
(No. of People (Employed	243	130	N/A	N/A
Manufacturing Plants	2 (1)	2	N/A	1 (2)
Manufacturing Employees	-	60	N/A	N/A
Tax Assessment	\$7.6 Million	\$1.7 Million	\$7.2 Million	\$6.9 Million
Motor Vehicle Registrations	2,500	1,400	N/A	N/A
Retail Sales	\$11.5 Million	\$4.9 Million	\$6.5 Million	N/A

(1) Great Canadian Oil Sands currently employs an estimated 1,200 Men (including sub-contractors).

(2) Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. employs approximately 600 persons.

goodly number of people from the labor force at Fort Chipewyan participate in the development which surrounds them.

PROFILE OF KEY REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The key regional communities of concern to Fort Chipewyan are shown on Chart X. They are Fort McMurray, Uranium City, Fort Smith and High Level. Table XXII summarizes the pertinent data and information in these communities.

The future of Fort McMurray appears very promising, insofar as the Great Canadian Oil Sands development will in all likelihood soon be paralleled by an even larger, similar oil extraction plant operated by Syncrude Ltd. The result of this development will clearly be a substantial city in the years to come. The strong economic base of Fort McMurray, together with its traditional links with Fort Chipewyan, will clearly represent the key community toward which those persons achieving increased mobility will gravitate.

Uranium City's future growth, as well as its continued existence is clearly tied in to the uranium industry and Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. While the long-term outlook may well be promising, the short and medium term is very indefinite. In the meantime, the very substantial work force at Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. will always provide opportunity for Fort Chipewyan area people should any of them mobilize to take advantage of the opportunity. Certainly in the case of Uranium City, as well as Fort McMurray, there is no reason why individuals, both those with and without dependents, can not continue to make their homes in Fort Chipewyan.

High Level's economy is based on government departments, forestry operations, transportation and general service to the

northern part of Alberta. Several Fort Chipewyan area people have relocated to this community as employees of Swanson Lumber Company, a practice which may well continue at a modest level. Overall, however, High Level is not of great significance as a community toward which Fort Chipewyan area people might look for employment.

Fort Smith, N. W. T., to Fort Chipewyan's north, is a fairly static community, whose economic base is government employment and transportation. At present, Fort Smith is of very little significance to Fort Chipewyan area people. However, the younger people might well look to Fort Smith in the future as a place where training and employment might be gained.

HISTORY OF FORT CHIPEWYAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE OUTSIDE ECONOMY

Over the years, the vast majority of Fort Chipewyan area people have involved themselves in fishing, trapping, hunting, lumbering, barging, bush work and miscellaneous government and local wage employment in the immediate area. A few have ventured to places such as Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort McMurray, Uranium City and even Edmonton. A very few have relocated their families away from Fort Chipewyan to assume jobs in places such as High Level, as was the case recently with two employees of Swanson Lumber. There have also been one or two examples of young men from Fort Chipewyan going to Edmonton, enrolling and completing apprenticeship courses in such areas as tinsmithing. The experience, however, has been overwhelmingly in the opposite direction. That is, with these very few exceptions, over the past 20 years (prior to which literally no participation in the outside economy existed) there has been only a sporadic outside participation by Fort

Chipewyan people and at the present time such participation is practically nil.

RELOCATION EXPERIENCE OF THE FORT CHIPEWYAN AREA PEOPLE

The success with which families from Fort Chipewyan have been able to successfully relocate the family unit to centres distant from the area has been even more discouraging.

Several years ago, some 20 families from the area were relocated to homes and jobs in Edmonton. This costly project, undertaken jointly by Canada Manpower and the Department of Northern and Indian Affairs, failed miserably despite the very considerable cost. The virtual certainty of failure, where artificially induced relocation to a strange new environment is involved, provides important clues to the process of development of socio-economic goals for Fort Chipewyan.

SECTION SEVEN - COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Thus far, major emphasis has been placed on the economy of the study area and of Fort Chipewyan in particular. Little emphasis has been placed on the people, the way they live, the things they are striving for, the organizations through which community action takes place and other such local, grass root considerations. This section is intended to shed some light on these areas, insofar as our work program allowed investigation. The primary source for the information presented here was local observation.

Much has been written, by researchers from a variety of disciplines, about virtually every native community in Canada. Over the past twenty-five years in particular, a tremendous number of "surveys" have been taken. Fort Chipewyan, while it has not received the attention that some more centrally located communities have received, has had its share of studies. It is unfortunately a fact that the poor or non-existent follow-up and on-going communication that has too often accompanied such studies has produced considerable cynicism amongst local people. This is certainly the case in Fort Chipewyan. In the case of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project it should be avoided at all cost.

THE PEOPLE OF FORT CHIPEWYAN, THEIR ATTITUDES AND THEIR LIFE STYLE

The people of Fort Chipewyan are Indian and Metis people. It is far easier to be an Indian or Metis Canadian while living at Fort Chipewyan than it is to be an Indian or Metis Canadian in some town or city far, or perhaps not so far, from Fort Chipewyan.

There are many very real forces which bind the people to Fort Chipewyan. Naturally in making this statement it must be acknowledged that such a generalization does not apply uniformly to young and to

old. The young people may not be influenced by all of the forces listed below, but certainly by some. Among the significant forces which are very real to the people of Fort Chipewyan are:

- * The complete lack of logic in moving away from the furs, the forests, and the Lake.
- * The dozens of dog teams, and other similar possessions.
- * The progress being made in housing, recreational facilities and programming, and educational facilities.
- * The availability of welfare, with no corresponding loss of dignity and self-respect.
- * The lack of real belief that a "better life" could be found and achieved elsewhere.
- * The knowledge somewhere in the mind of almost every, relatively mature local person that he is probably just a little more in control of his destiny in Fort Chipewyan than he would be in Edmonton or elsewhere.
- * For the Treaty Indians, their land. The Chipewyans have talked about rebuilding the townsite on their Reserve 201 across the Lake. The Cree Band land entitlement negotiations, which have gone on for years, hold forth the promise of farming, lumbering, and gypsum mining.

There are potent forces, and with the exception of the last mentioned, most are well founded in truth and fact. It is all of these things which are in the minds of leaders and individuals as they proceed through the weeks, months and years.

The hundreds of small children of Fort Chipewyan are like children everywhere. It seems, in fact, that at least in terms of the amount of money they have to spend on ice cream, pop and movies throughout the year, they may even be "spoiled" to a degree greater than customary in white society. It seems, however, that as they grow older they are being increasingly placed in the dilemma of "what to do with their lives". This dilemma is commonly experienced by white teenagers throughout Alberta and Canada, however, they are far more aware of alternative career paths, as well as actual oppor-

tunities which they may or may not decide to grasp. For the emerging teenage Fort Chipewyan boy or girl, the situation is much different. They are influenced by the forces mentioned above and yet they find very few actual meaningful opportunities into which they can direct themselves. The simple fact is that this must be changed.

The life style of the people of Fort Chipewyan is as much characterized by "being able to go and shoot a moose or a beaver, or catch some fish, or do a bit of trapping" whenever the spirit moves, as by anything else. The people don't regulate their own lives on any particular schedule, nor do they function within any regulated environment (be it an organization, a company, a community, etc.) particularly well. Small things in white society often assume very great significance to the local people, with the opposite case often holding true concerning things of great importance to white society.

Traditionally, the native person has been an unskilled laborer in those cases in which he became employed. In recent years, the native political leaders and associations, together with government employees, have directed much effort toward fostering local enterprise, managed, owned and operated by the people of communities such as Fort Chipewyan. Unfortunately, the values, life style, work attitudes and basic motivation of such people are out of phase with the true realities of business enterprise. Here, training, technical support, interim management inputs and time provide the answers.

This last point is important for two reasons. There are now, and will be in the future, some opportunities requiring entrepreneurial and management skills of local people. But more important, where economic benefits are available through fostering non-management type developments, these opportunities should not be

passed up in order to pursue goals which are simply not reasonable, nor appropriate for the people involved.

Lastly, the impression received by your consultants regarding the general "state of well-being" of the people of Fort Chipewyan was that while on the one hand there is general dissatisfaction in most people's minds about certain economic related matters (e.g. trapping no good, no jobs, etc.), on the other hand even a modest, but consistent improvement in the economic situation would have to become evident in order to produce general contentment in the minds of most people. Most residents of Fort Chipewyan have travelled to Edmonton and other centres on educational, medical recreational and other types of trips. Based on these exposures, most appear to have concluded that "Fort Chipewyan isn't such a bad place after all". Under the circumstances, your consultants agree.

THE TOWNSITE

The townsite of Fort Chipewyan itself, while somewhat disorganized provides the basis for a reasonably well planned town. Certainly, the location of the town, overlooking the Delta and Lake Athabasca has tremendous potential.

The Department of Municipal Affairs recently carried out a zoning study which will provide the basis for future development. Undoubtedly there will be much controversy among individuals and organizations regarding the restrictions which such an approach to locating houses, services and community facilities will impose.

The few miles of road in Fort Chipewyan, while they could stand some improvement, are basically adequate, as is the street lighting, water services, telephone, electricity, etc. It could probably be argued that the introduction of these services, primarily since the

War, may have brought with them little social benefit to the local people, however, they are perhaps useful in order to provide the necessary familiarity for those persons who may move, travel or work elsewhere. And certainly, they are basic to the long-term goal of producing socio-economic benefits to local people through a diversified program of tourism into the area.

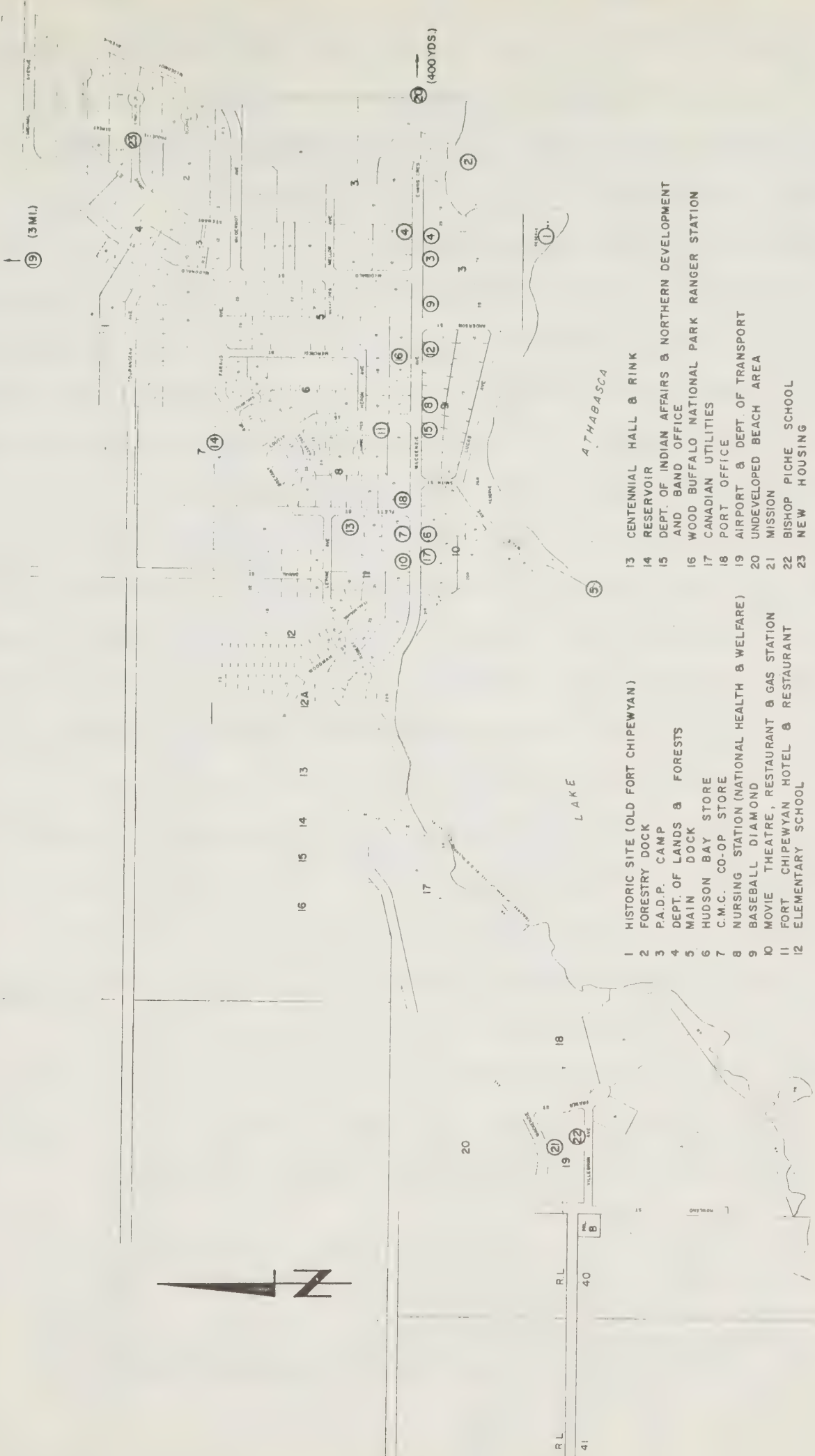
A map of the townsite, identifying the various facilities in the community is shown as Chart XI. Situated as it is on the edge of a huge lake, adjacent to a highly productive Delta and an immense National Park, as well as being at the junction of several major rivers, surely makes this a townsite worthy of careful and appropriate development, with due regard to overall esthetics.

HOUSING

As in similar Canadian native communities, housing and housing conditions range from very satisfactory to very unsatisfactory in Fort Chipewyan. New and improved housing, introduced over the years to come will provide positive social benefits as well as employment and equity in the homes themselves.

Alberta Housing have been active and appear to have been responsible for the development of 18 homes between September, 1969 and the current time. In addition, several houses have been constructed through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development housing program. Local labor has been utilized to a varying degree and through more effective planning and job related training could be increased.

The general condition and external appearance of many Fort Chipewyan homes does leave much to be desired, particularly from the standpoint of improving the general attractiveness of the town



- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | HISTORIC SITE (OLD FORT CHIPEWYAN) | 13 | CENTENNIAL HALL & RINK |
| 2 | FORESTRY DOCK | 14 | RESERVOIR |
| 3 | P.A.D.P. CAMP | 15 | DEPT. OF INDIAN AFFAIRS & NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND BAND OFFICE |
| 4 | DEPT. OF LANDS & FORESTS | 16 | WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK RANGER STATION |
| 5 | MAIN DOCK | 17 | CANADIAN UTILITIES |
| 6 | HUDSON BAY STORE | 18 | PORT OFFICE |
| 7 | C.M.C. CO-OP STORE | 19 | AIRPORT & DEPT. OF TRANSPORT |
| 8 | NURSING STATION (NATIONAL HEALTH & WELFARE) | 20 | UNDEVELOPED BEACH AREA |
| 9 | BASEBALL DIAMOND | 21 | MISSION |
| 10 | MOVIE THEATRE, RESTAURANT & GAS STATION | 22 | BISHOP PICHE SCHOOL |
| 11 | FORT CHIPEWYAN HOTEL & RESTAURANT | 23 | NEW HOUSING |
| 12 | ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | | |

TOWNSITE AT FORT CHIPEWYAN

itself. Car bodies, furniture and general waste is evident in many yards and a clean-up program could provide jobs for several young people next spring, should such a program be properly introduced in order to allow receptivity on the part of the people.

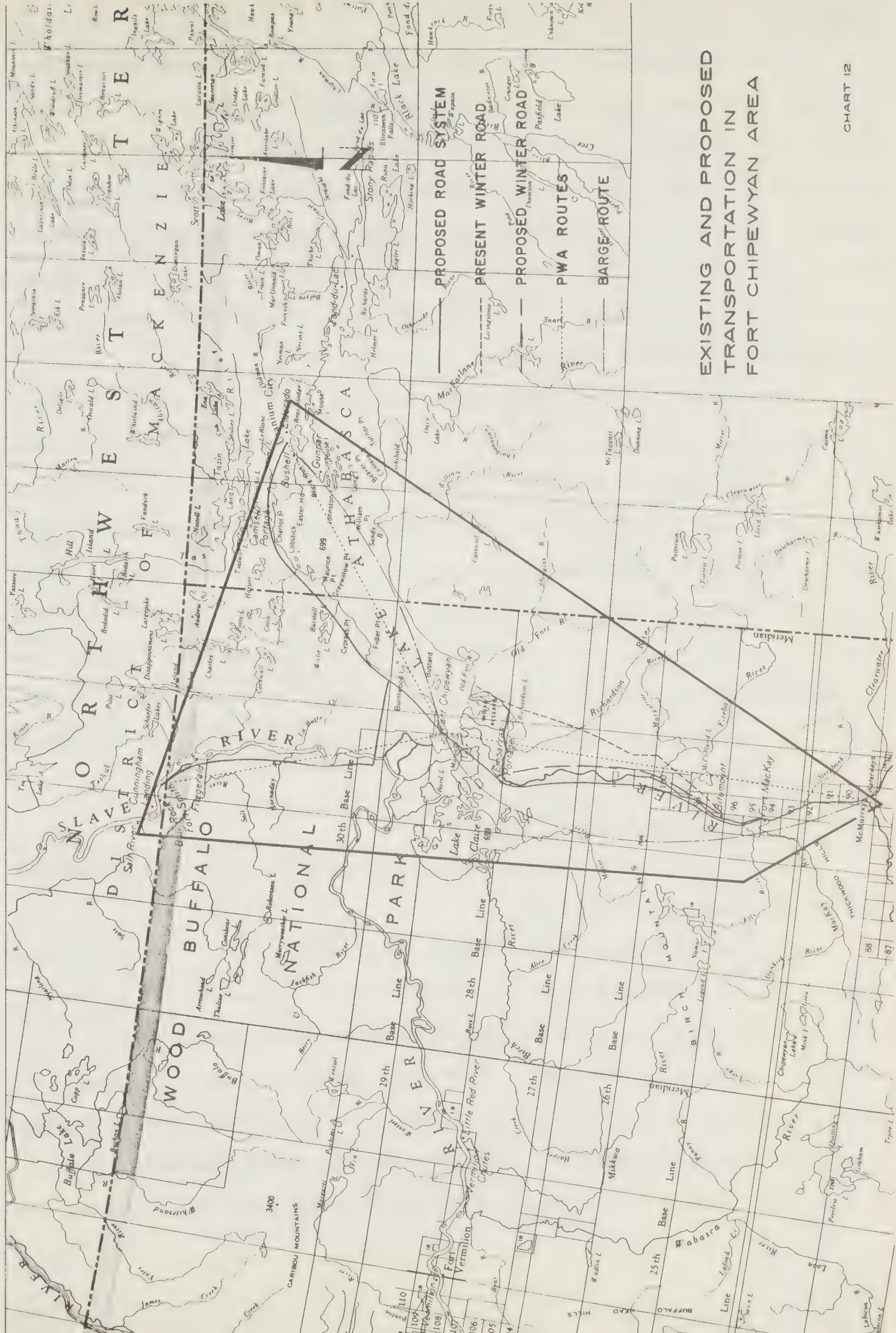
ACCESS, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The study area as a whole is isolated and basically as unconnected with the outside world as areas in the Arctic. Once a transportation hub due to the importance of barge traffic for the movement of people rather than simply freight the town has become a minor stopping point on the north-south schedule of Pacific Western Airlines.

Ultimately, a road will come to the area. A variety of routes are possible, with most of the alternatives having been explored in the Northeastern Alberta Road Study, carried out in 1968 by the Alberta Department of Highways. Cost estimates in excess of \$20 million were determined for the two basic road systems that appeared possible and desirable at the time of that study. (Chart XII) Additional possibilities do exist, the main ones being a road from Fort Smith to Fort Chipewyan (estimated at \$4.7 million in 1968) or in from Fort Vermilion on the west (no estimate available).

In connection with the overall subject of a road into the area, which obviously would open up the area much more widely to the Canadian public, several points appear very important to emphasize.

- 1) At the present time, it is doubtful whether a net positive socio-economic benefit to the local people would result from the existence of such a road.
- 2) The facilities do not exist in Fort Chipewyan, nor in the general area, to take advantage of the traffic that would be generated.
- 3) In cost/benefit terms, it is highly unlikely that the project could be justified in the short-term.



EXISTING AND PROPOSED
TRANSPORTATION IN
FORT CHIPEWYAN AREA

It is possible, however, that within the relatively near future a route could be determined as providing the best long-term alternative for the provision of highway access directly from the south. Preliminary work could then proceed, accelerating over a period of years. With careful planning, much local economic benefit could be made available to local people through employment on the road development. This will depend on the capability of local organizations in mobilizing the labor force.

The main form of communication between the study area and the outside world would be the C. B. C. Northern Radio out of Yellowknife. This is supplemented by trips outside taken by various individuals, as well as by the activities of local organizations such as the Indian Bands, the Metis Association, etc. Few newspapers are read. There is no television. The introduction of the Frontier Pack T.V. which is available, for example, to the residents of Uranium City, would have a positive effect on the community and should be encouraged. Anything that can be done to improve communication with the outside world must be considered as generally desirable.

COST OF LIVING AND EXPENDITURE PATTERNS

Life in the north, in general, is expensive with Fort Chipewyan certainly being no exception.

Information regarding the expenditure patterns of the study area's people was not available on any formal basis. However, it would be our general observation that the conclusion established by the Economic Council of Canada in 1969 (6th Annual Review - Perspective 1975) would generally hold true. That conclusion was that while poor families tended to spend, in absolute dollar terms, between 60% and 70% of that spent by non-poor families on food, shelter, tobacco and

TABLE XXIII

Comparison of Food and Related Prices
(Fort Chipewyan and Edmonton, July, 1971)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Edmonton</u>	<u>Fort Chipewyan</u>
Milk (1 qt.)	.31	.75
Powdered Milk (12 qts.)	1.59	1.75
Eggs (1 dozen)	.58	.75
Ice Cream (1 qt.)	55/60¢	.95
Ice Cream (1 gal.)	2.39	3.60
Apples (1 lb.)	.25	.42
Margarine	.24	.49
T. V. Dinner	.75	.99
Libby's Beans (19 oz.)	2/71¢	2/87¢
Sun Pac Orange Juice	.59	.99
Mr. Clean	.55	.64
Cheer (2 lbs. 10 oz.)	2.5¢/oz.	3.3¢/oz.
York Jam (48 fl. oz.)	1.51	1.59
Evaporated Milk	2/41¢	2/51¢
Bacon (1 lb. in the piece)	40/50¢/lb.	.71
Bulk Wieners (1 lb.)	.55	.82
Lard (2 lbs.)	.47	1.15

alcohol, they spend much less (25% - 50%) on recreation, clothing, education, medical care, reading, etc. Thus, most available money goes to basic food and shelter, plus non-productive consumption. Certainly, little money goes toward those categories which could be considered as personal self-investment. The implications of an indefinite continuation of this pattern are quite clear.

Table XXIII presents the results of a brief survey of food and related costs in Fort Chipewyan, together with a comparison with Edmonton prices. High air freight costs are generally responsible for the higher prices in the local area. This rate is \$11.00 per 100 lbs. (12¢ per lb. for shipments less than 100 lbs. with a minimum charge of \$5.00). Some of the discrepancies appear unreasonable, even allowing for this level of freight cost.

EDUCATIONAL, RECREATIONAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Fort Chipewyan appears to be adequately provided for regarding facilities within the community. The schools appear very satisfactory, with a new elementary school under construction. Unfortunately, students wishing to complete high school must move away from home to take Grades 11 and 12. While a good case might be made in support of arguments both for and against enabling students to complete their schooling at home, it is clear that at the present time the limited employment opportunities in Fort Chipewyan for those persons finishing high school would appear to support the concept of ensuring at least some concerted exposure of the students to opportunities away from home, at this particular stage in life. This situation could change if the extent of local employment opportunity was to improve.

Recreational and general community facilities (e.g. baseball diamonds, skating rinks, hall, etc.) appear to be satisfactory.

Apparently, another hall may be in prospect under the Department of Youth and Recreation's capital grant program. Clearly, however, it is in the area of recreational and community programming, rather than expanded facilities that progress is needed. Fort Chipewyan is certainly no exception in this regard.

MANPOWER AND SKILLS

Of the estimated male labor force of some 367, it is apparent that as many as 10% - 15% would be considered as unemployable for health or social reasons. Thus, in reality, Fort Chipewyan's available labor force is actually somewhere between 313 and 331. Naturally, insofar as many of these men, due to their advancing years, would not be capable of carrying out the heavier type jobs, the force is further reduced. Finally, many of those 16 and over are still in school and not available. We have not been able to specifically identify the true scope and content of the labor force. This is an important future project, which should logically be undertaken by those local organizations involved in mobilization. It may already have been done, however, we were not able to obtain this type of information.

With regard to the skills now possessed by the labor force of Fort Chipewyan, they are still basically related to the lake, the bush, the forestry industry and boat building. The Alberta Newstart operations, which only ceased to exist in Fort Chipewyan during the course of this study, provided both academic upgrading and technical training in areas such as equipment operation, maintenance and repair, welding and other vocations primarily related to northern type work. While this training, particularly in the vocational area, undoubtedly contributed to the overall skills available in the local labor pool,

very little, if any, local application of these skills has been possible. Thus, it is very difficult to assess the current skill status of the several dozen individuals who have participated thus far in the Newstart program.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The major local organizations of significance are as follows:

1. Local Advisory Committee

This local body is the creation of the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs. It is still in the very early stages of its existence. A Chairman and seven Councillors are elected under the auspices of the Field Service Branch of Municipal Affairs. Meeting monthly, the Committee is consulted in the making of decisions; it is asked to establish a budget annually; and, it is proposed to have them make decisions such as the awarding of contracts for such services as garbage collection. Under the existing legislation, the Committee has no authority to expend public funds or directly enter into contracts or to pledge the credit of the Improvement District for any undertaking.

Despite its limited authority, the Advisory Committee is playing a valuable role and is actively looking into such matters as industrial development and other matters of public concern. The future success of this Committee in furthering its own goals, will run a close parallel to general progress of the community. To date, its development has been hampered by much misunderstanding on the part of a large portion of the local population as to what the true purpose of the Local Advisory Committee is.

2. Cree and Chipewyan Bands

The largest percentage of Fort Chipewyan's people are Treaty Indians, both Cree and Chipewyan. The two bands have merged their administrative and management functions together and employ common staff, etc. The functions of the Band organization cover welfare administration, counselling, Treaty privileges, economic development projects, recreation, community development, etc. In terms of its relationships with the Alberta Indian Association, the Band performs semi-political functions as well.

With respect to the real and unique problems of the Indian people, there is a very necessary role for an organization such as the Cree/Chipewyan Band, particularly in a community such as Fort Chipewyan. The danger which exists, however, is that the Band, the Advisory Committee, and the Metis Association Local referred to below will each independently pursue what they deem to be important social and economic objectives. The improvement of co-operation and communication between local organizations must be an important goal for Fort Chipewyan. This has particular significance for mobilization of the labor force, and economic development in general. There are several good examples of co-operation in specific situations such as last year's supervised buffalo kill and meat distribution.

3. Metis Association (Fort Chipewyan Local)

This Association represents a far smaller number of people and has no permanent staff. The President and one or two of the Directors appear to carry most of the load. The President participates regularly in the Edmonton-based Metis Association of Alberta meetings. The Metis Association has been a major force behind the Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative in which Metis members predominate. In the near future, the continued development of the fishing organization will absorb most of the energies of the Metis Association members. In the future, the Association might provide a useful vehicle for other development type opportunities.

4. Alberta Newstart Inc.

This "action-research", training oriented organization recently suspended operations in Fort Chipewyan, in line with the general curtailment of Newstart's North-Eastern Alberta operations. The facilities, a number of mobile buildings, are presently idle, pending a decision regarding the future vehicle for academic upgrading and vocational training in this part of Alberta. Following the closing of Newstart in the summer of 1971, a organization named Pe-Ta-Pun, with representation from the various Northeastern Alberta communities was formed, supported financially by the Province of Alberta. A Fort Chipewyan group was established, however, your consultants are not aware of any significant developments to this date. The possibility of resurrecting Newstart is apparently still under consideration.

Regardless of the vehicle, there is and will be a need for academic upgrading and vocational training. As stated previously, however, the content and emphasis of the technical and vocational training must be geared to employment opportunities which do exist or can be developed in the Fort Chipewyan area. To do otherwise, is to assume a degree of mobility which does not exist.

At the time of this study 5 families were enrolled at the Fort Chipewyan Newstart facilities. Several other families were in Fort McMurray at the Alberta Vocational Centre. We are not in the position to assess the overall success to date of Newstart in Fort Chipewyan, but in economic and employment terms the impact has been very low.

5. Other Local Organizations

Several other local organizations are worthy of note. The Indian Association of Alberta has been active locally in the recreation field although this may not be the case now that that organization's field services have been cut back. The C. M. C. Co-operative, whose primary role has been to operate the local co-op store, has been successful in providing employment as well as a shopping alternative to the Hudson Bay Co. The Handicraft Guild, while it has not been too active recently, could be a significant focus for future activity.

EAST END LAKE ATHABASCA COMMUNITIES

At the outset of this study, it was anticipated that there might be a positive opportunity for the communities of the region, including those in Saskatchewan, through increased inter-community relationships, development efforts, general communication, etc. The insular nature of Black Lake/Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac and Camsell Portage, together with a resource base similar to that of Fort Chipewyan suggested this possibility.

However, aside from the obvious fact that each of the communities mentioned has a vested interest in the water levels of Lake Athabasca and, thus can be considered jointly in terms of water resource management, there is really nothing to be gained from considering the problems and opportunities to these other communities simultaneously.

Camsell Portage has but a few families and little growth is evident. The men have a good reputation as workers in various fields. The populations of Stony Rapids and Fond du Lac, on the other hand, are growing fairly steadily, having increased by an estimated total of 260 since 1966 (from 780 to 1,040, an increase of 37%).

Insofar as the majority of the people in these Saskatchewan Lake Athabasca communities are status Indians, the development efforts related to these communities are carried out largely under the auspices of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Among the development programs presently being encouraged and carried forward are:

- * General mobilization in order to take advantage of employment opportunities presented by resource based developments such as the Gulf uranium mine at Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan.
- * General tourism development, with a fishing emphasis and the possible outfitting for caribou in the Northwest Territories.

The people of these communities have a fairly good reputation as fishermen, bush workers and trappers and the other pursuits in which they have engaged over the years.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

The effectiveness of the relationship which exists between a community, its organizations and its individual citizens, on the one hand, and the wide array of Federal and Provincial Departments and agencies on the other, is critical to the development of a community such as Fort Chipewyan.

In the course of just a few weeks or months, it would not be unusual for the community of Fort Chipewyan to feel the impact, in various ways, of the programs and personnel of the following Federal and Provincial Departments and their distinct branches and agencies.

Federal

- Canada Manpower
- National Health and Welfare
- Ministry of Transport
- Post Office
- Public Works
- Indian Affairs Branch
- National Parks and Historical Sites Branch
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Department of the Environment
- Regional Expansion and Development
- Northern Transportation Ltd.
- Central Mortgage and Housing
- R. C. M. P.

Provincial

- Lands and Forests
- Highways
- Municipal Affairs
- Education
- Environment
- Health and Social Development
- Alberta Housing Corp.
- Industry and Tourism
- Co-operative Activities Branch
- Youth and Recreation
- Attorney General

No particular attempt has been made to develop a comprehensive list here. However, each of these 24 departments, agencies and branches are carrying on their programs in Fort Chipewyan. Several important points need to be made here.

1. While this list might well be organized into such categories as economic development, natural resources, transportation, health and other categories they have been presented randomly here in order to as closely as possible simulate the confusing array of programs and services "available" to the local people.
2. Following upon this last point, there is a critical need for training and on-going counsel, directed towards local people in positions of leadership as to the implications of government in the broad sense (i.e. programs, grants, loans, employment, etc.) for Fort Chipewyan.
3. As a major "industry" in a sense, in Fort Chipewyan, government at both levels has a responsibility to maximize the economic impact of its local operations, through employment, training, etc. This is a big opportunity area which can not be dealt with at the authority level of those persons stationed in Fort Chipewyan. Rather, a high welfare, low mobility community such as Fort Chipewyan deserves the periodic attention of senior policy-makers, in various departments, sitting together and making sound decisions based on the communities' real, and hopefully expressed, needs.

SECTION EIGHT - THE OUTLOOK TO 1980 AND BEYOND

As a basis for conclusions respecting the establishment of appropriate socio-economic goals and development programs for a community such as Fort Chipewyan, it is necessary to identify as accurately as possible the direction of current trends and where they are apt to lead the community by 1980.

POPULATION

Many unknowns, most significant of which is the birth rate, make it very difficult to predict the population level most likely to prevail in 1980. Certainly the far above average per/thousand live birth rate of many similar native communities has been sharply reduced by increased availability of birth control knowledge. However, the large and much increased number of persons who will be between the ages of 16 and 40 during the next 10 years in Fort Chipewyan would seem to support the projection made in Section Three of between 2,100 and 2,200 by 1980. The other factor, substantial permanent relocation of families and individuals away from Fort Chipewyan is not likely to even exceed the number of persons who may move to Fort Chipewyan.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOR FORCE

The current estimated, effective male labor force of some 320 will clearly grow substantially during the 1970's, insofar as there will be a definite excess of men moving into the 16 - 64 age group over those moving out. For example, a very large percentage of the estimated 225 males under 14 years of age as of 1966 are just now moving into the effective Fort Chipewyan labor force. An increasing number of this group will qualify each year during the decade. A male labor force well in excess of 400, and probably closer to 500, is indicated by 1980 in Fort Chipewyan. More precise and reliable

data should be developed in this regard through the local organizations.

Current trends in number of persons employed and man-months (or man-month of equivalent employment as in the case of trapping) are moving in the opposite direction. That is, as the labor force grows, employment appears to be dropping. While modest gains are being made in employment with local services and government departments, sharp drops are being experienced in the traditional areas of trapping, forestry, barging, mining and fishing.

The obvious implications of a larger labor pool and less employment require no elaboration. Not only will social assistance rise dramatically, but mobility will become virtually non-existent as a result of the limited opportunity for on-the-job training.

INCOME LEVELS

Earned, productive income appears to be on a downward course and there does not presently seem to be any short-term development which will reverse this trend. The effects on per capita income, in the face of rising population, are obvious. These levels are already critically low and threaten to go lower. Should the people of Fort Chipewyan, as a result of this sinking income level, become increasingly dependent on social assistance during the coming years, they will have been deprived of the kind of control of their own destinies which Canada's native people are striving for so hard.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The levels of Federal and Provincial social assistance inputs in Fort Chipewyan will clearly increase during the 1970's. The only thing that can reduce the extent of this increase is expanded, non-seasonal wage employment opportunities and a reversal in the downward trends in the traditional areas of fur, fish and forestry.

A 4% annual inflation adjustment alone, if applied to the estimated 1971/72 welfare levels of \$216,000 would produce a level of \$306,000 by 1980. A continuation of the 5 year increase trend (1966/67 - 1971/72) of 118% would produce a level of some \$510,000 by 1980. Clearly, however, current economic trends and an accelerated increase in the number of family units will produce an even higher welfare level than that which would be produced by the historical experience.

If we assume that a population of 2,000 by 1980 will include some 350 family units, and further assume that a minimum of \$6,000 total income will be required by each unit to sustain itself, it is apparent that \$2.1 Million of earned and welfare income will have to be available in Fort Chipewyan. Should it be possible during this same period to not only sustain current earned income levels, but in fact reverse the trend to a level of \$1.0 Million by 1980 (75 man-years of increased employment) a gap of \$1.1 Million would still have to be made up in the form of welfare and other transfer payments. Thus, if a fairly substantial reversal in economic trends is made during the short and medium-term a welfare input level of at least \$700,000 by 1980 seems almost a certainty. Should current economic trends continue, the welfare input will be correspondingly higher.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Progress is now being made in this area and will likely continue. However, a worsening economic atmosphere will seriously reduce the effectiveness of community development inputs from both local and government sources. It is apparent that the most positive type of community development which will be applicable in the short-term at least is economic development, job generation, on-the-job training,

development of opportunities for women and leadership and business training. Success in these areas will pay handsome dividends for the people in terms of increased quality of life, which is the objective of community development.

EDUCATION

As stated previously, the young people of Fort Chipewyan have little or nothing to look forward to having completed their schooling. Thus, in a large number of cases they do not in fact complete it.

The availability of meaningful summer job opportunities, and later permanent job opportunities, in and around Fort Chipewyan, will have an important positive effect on educational aspiration and achievement. Also, the availability, on a permanent, year-round basis, of a trained educational technician for purposes of vocational counselling, is apt to produce benefits in this regard.

In the absence of these things, the benefits of the educational process may well continue to pass the majority of Fort Chipewyan's young people by.

MOBILITY

The people of Fort Chipewyan are not mobile in terms of where they might live and work. Such lack of mobility deprives them of the opportunity, which in white Canadian society is virtually a right, to live where and as they choose. This will be an increasing problem during the 1970's and further into the future as more and more of the local people become less connected to the traditional native life style of hunting, fishing and trapping.

Employment opportunities and training, available and applicable in the Fort Chipewyan area appear to be the only answers to the problem of increased mobility.

SECTION NINE - THE RESOURCE BASE

This section of the report and those which follow deal with the future. Resources, opportunities to develop these resources as well as other social and economic opportunities are brought into focus together with the appropriate timing, responsibility and other implementation considerations.

AN OVERVIEW

An examination of the resource base of an area such as Fort Chipewyan, in the context of a socio-economic review focussing on the local population, may perhaps appear to ignore the significance of the resources in the broader national and even international sense. However, in this case there does not appear to be much, if any real conflict in terms of resource management policy between local and national/international considerations. The fish, wildlife, vegetation, water and general esthetics found in the lakes and rivers, the Delta, the Park and the Canadian Shield should ultimately be valued equally, though naturally from a different standpoint, by the local people and those thousands of miles away. As the years pass, and the local people begin to depend less upon exploitive activities such as trapping, hunting and fishing and more on the income benefits from tourism, in its very broadest sense, this common interest will, of course, become more apparent.

To an outsider, in this case your consultants, the resource base of the area appears to abound with opportunities which if properly developed over the next 10 - 20 years could potentially provide very substantially expanded social and economic benefits to the area's people. This is not to say, however, that the actual achievement of these benefits is not a highly complex process, nor is it to say that

the entire labor force which might emerge in the coming decades could be supported by the local resource base. Both for economic and social reasons, it is to be hoped that many of the local people will eventually move to other centres. However, during the period 1971 - 1980, there does appear to be much scope for development of the identifiable resource base.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The existing and human resource base of Fort Chipewyan must be viewed, if its future potential is to be fully developed, in a positive manner, rather than in the traditional "burden-on-society" basis. This attitude must be adopted, particularly by government, if any real progress is to be made.

In Fort Chipewyan, a substantial growing labor force exists in an otherwise unpopulated area. Forestry and general bush skills predominate at present. Government and industry can look to this labor force in the future for casual and permanent employees. A sustained, diversified program of job skill training in which the community would participate fully at the development stage and in ongoing operation, carried out over a ten year period would have a tremendous pay-off in cost/benefit terms. Where possible, on-the-job training is highly preferable. The training must gear people for jobs in and around Fort Chipewyan - not Fort McMurray or Pine Point - that might come later. If the jobs don't exist they can and should be created over a period of time.

An added dimension here is management and semi-management training. Again on a sustained basis for years to come. Here we are dealing with developing achievement motivation and the understanding necessary to sustain this motivation. There are probably 15 to 20 persons in Fort

Chipewyan at present, some of them young people, who would at this time benefit from various types of custom-tailored training on management and related subjects. This should take place in concentrated periods, both in Fort Chipewyan and at a live-in situation away from Fort Chipewyan. The concept of placing individuals in various specially selected business situations (i.e., selected because of their relevance to Fort Chipewyan opportunities) throughout Alberta for short on-the-job training periods should be considered. Canada Manpower would undoubtedly support this, as they would other types of training. The possible result in the future of training of the type described here is an increased ability for the people of Fort Chipewyan to take advantage of the various support programs for business development such as the Native Incentive Fund.

The above described positive approach to the human resource base of Fort Chipewyan, well developed, well communicated, fully participated in by local people and organizations and sustained over several years is clearly an identifiable productivity area with a very attractive cost-benefit.

FUR

The numerous varieties of furs which have been taken for over two centuries from the Delta, other portions of the Park, and the Canadian Shield in Saskatchewan and Alberta continues to represent an extremely important resource for the local people. In this regard, the information now being generated through the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project by the Canadian Wildlife Service should be of great value.

While it cannot be disputed that lower water levels on the Delta, the primary source of muskrat in the area, have undoubtedly reduced the availability of that particular species, it seems equally clear

that a variety of other economic and social factors underly the general decline of trapping and the income which it produces. In the opinion of your consultants among the most important of these factors are the following:

- * Like people everywhere, the people of Fort Chipewyan, now that they are established on a year-round basis in the town, do not like to spend weeks at a time on the trapline. The children, and hence the wife, can not come and this changes the picture from that which once prevailed. This factor appears virtually unchangeable and as a result a large percentage of Fort Chipewyan's trappers will in the future be "hobby trappers" if they aren't already.
- * The basically marginal economic return of trapping, as it is now structured and practised, has become less and less attractive for the people as they have moved almost completely into a cash-type economy not unlike any town of similar size anywhere in Canada.
- * The ready availability of welfare has undoubtedly lessened the motivation of individuals to spend extensive periods on the trapline. As the years go by adjustments are made for inflation in welfare allowances, however, if anything, fur prices have generally moved downward.
- * Finally, it appears quite clear that as the older, highly productive trappers become less active on the traplines they continue to hold, there is no real opportunity for younger trappers to take over, although in many instances the sons do move in. However, the upcoming generation, from all indications, are not disposed to become trappers.

Although a reversal in the downward trend of trapping income represents one of the main opportunities for short-term improvement in the depressed economic picture, to accomplish this reversal will not be easy.

Among the steps which would appear to your consultants to be necessary if the trapping vocation is to be revitalized in Fort Chipewyan and fur values are to achieve their potential are the following:

- * Immediate development of an improved fur data collection system in order that statistics covering production by species, area and value received will be available in a useable form. Considering the importance of the fur resource in Alberta, current data must be considered entirely inadequate.
- * Review of all legislation covering trapping and possible restructuring of the trapline grid, which now gives evidence of being unsuitable for producing optimum area fur values in the future.
- * Conduct of feasibility studies into the development of an intensive muskrat management program. The high natural productivity of the Delta may well provide an ideal opportunity for such a program, which according to experimental programs carried out elsewhere could increase the harvest from five to ten times. This could conceivably result in exploitation of the food and muskrat gland values, as well as increased local benefit through possible preliminary processing of the pelts locally.
- * Establishment of a local trapper's organization. Such a step now seems highly desirable and would enhance whatever steps are finally determined to be necessary and appropriate to revitalize the fur industry of the area. Because trapping has traditionally been highly individualistic this will not be an easy step. However, the successful establishment of such an organization would as much as anything signify that trapping in the area can continue to be a significant part of the economic base, despite the transition in life style which can not be reversed.

While your consultants are not in the position to express an opinion as to what level of cost might be reasonable for water control measures designed to maintain the muskrat productivity of the Delta, it seems clear that for some time to come the potential fur harvest will continue to represent the single largest income source, considering the time and effort required by the individual. It is equally apparent that trapping skills still predominate, although they seem to be diminishing somewhat.

FISH

That portion of the area's true resource base represented by the Lake Athabasca commercial fishery holds desirable economic potential for the area's people. While processing facilities in Fort Chipewyan appear unfeasible in the foreseeable future, the fishery itself would appear capable of providing substantial income for up to 30 families.

The Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative is now preparing for the 1972 summer season. The Co-op has been trying to fill the void left by the withdrawal of McInnes Products from the west end of the Lake in 1968. Organizational, management and technical inadequacies appear to be the obstacles.

It is apparent to your consultants, based upon personal discussions with the Co-op management and a wide variety of other resources, that the walleye fishery, and to a lesser extent the pike and whitefish fishery, can be a major income producer. It is equally apparent that the Co-op is the vehicle through which this income can be realized, although its planning, management and operations must improve. Unfortunately, despite the considerable efforts now being put forth by several government departments, as well as the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board, little progress is apparent. A concentrated review of the entire situation, in which the Co-op's directors participate appears necessary.

The approach outlined recently by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board for the Co-operative provides an approximation of the potential significance of the fish resource base. Larger outfits (4) for deeper water fishing, such as those used at the Saskatchewan end of the Lake⁽¹⁾ would be necessary, as would upgraded receiving and

(1) The Co-operative is presently seeking to purchase several of these larger outfits.

packing facilities and hauling capability. The skills required for the operation of the larger fishing outfits would have to be developed through training.

In the Board's opinion, based upon 1971 prices, the net income potential to fishermen could be as outlined here:

<u>Outfit</u>	<u># People per outfit</u>	<u>Walleye</u> <u>(lbs. per Outfit)</u>	<u>Pike</u> <u>(lbs. per Outfit)</u>	<u>Whitefish</u> <u>(lbs. per Outfit)</u>	<u>Months</u>	<u>Income</u> <u>(\$ 000)</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Emp.</u>
4 large	4	18,000	20,000	70,000	4	8.6	16
10 medium	2	9,000	9,000	11,000	4	3.0	20
15 small	2	2,000	2,000	500	1	.6	30

The achievement of this operation could, therefore, conceivably, produce some \$75,000 to the fishermen with turnover in actual cash value of fish and packing in excess of \$100,000. While the net income to the fishermen, after the cost of nets, supplies and gas, would be considerably lower, these operations would nevertheless be significant in the overall Fort Chipewyan picture.

All facets of management, right from harvesting right through to shipping, would naturally have to be watched very carefully and training is indicated in this regard. While a properly organized fishery utilizing all the fish resources in Lake Athabasca plus those which may become available in other area lakes, can in all likelihood provide substantial income for many people, organizational and management considerations can not be stressed too much. A winter walleye fishery could also be a profitable operation should a winter road from the south become a reality into Fort Chipewyan.

FOREST

The significance of the Swanson Lumber forestry operations to the people of Fort Chipewyan was outlined previously. The elimination of summer planing operations considerably reduced this impact.

There is no commercial timber of significance outside the Park. From a social and economic standpoint it is highly desirable that a logging/sawmill operation be retained in the Park indefinitely, as this could continue to provide an important base for wage employment and training.

Presently, Swanson Lumber is uncertain about the future of its Sweetgrass mill and may be required to relocate to another area, possibly to the south of the Park near Embarass. As well, the Cree Band are very interested in obtaining timber resources as part of their treaty settlement, negotiations on which have remained in limbo for years. Park authorities have openly stated that they wish all forestry operations to cease entirely within the Park, which is intended as a true wilderness area.

While in the longer term, it should be possible for substantial economic benefit to accrue to the people from the non-extractive potential of the Park (i.e. government employment and various income generating activities related to recreation, research, tourism, water control, etc.) in the near future, it would be a minor economic disaster if forestry operations were to be further curtailed or even wound up.

MINERALS

The principal mineral of significance in the Fort Chipewyan area is uranium. Other minerals do occur, such as gypsum, granite and certain base metals, however, these other minerals do not have any significance which could be considered as a potential provider of economic benefits to the area within the next 10 - 20 years. Naturally, the Athabasca tar sands to the south, which promises to support expanded operations in the near future, will provide employment

opportunities should training and mobility allow participation.

With respect to uranium, however, the Mokta (Canada) Ltd. exploration program and Eldorado Nuclear should continue to provide employment opportunities for a dozen or so men, should there be any people from the Fort Chipewyan area who wish to take advantage of this situation.

While long-term demand for uranium for the production of nuclear power is not in doubt, and the possibility of increased exploration activity does exist within the decade, the mineral resource base immediately adjacent to Fort Chipewyan can not be relied upon for significant local benefits.

Mineral developments, in general, throughout the North, like the tar sands, will provide ongoing employment opportunities for those who would pursue these opportunities through training and increased mobility. The manner in which interest in such training can be stimulated needs careful examination. With regard to mobility, innovative approaches and research are clearly required. In the not too distant future, it may be feasible for some men from Fort Chipewyan to commute by air to and from places such as Fort McMurray. The physical and financial feasibility of such commuting would be an ideal project for a local organization to get involved in carrying out, with outside assistance.

SOIL

Agriculture on an economic scale is highly unlikely, due to lack of market, soil, know-how, attitudes and location. However, over a period of time, should sufficient research and training be carried out, a variety of interesting possibilities do exist. A small commercial garden could be established in several locations; grazing and

slaughtering young cattle may also be feasible; rabbit production, already being carried out in Fort Chipewyan on a small scale by one might be feasible, as well as small scale poultry production; further wild rice research appears necessary, near a location such as Jackfish Settlement (research to date appears to have been fragmentary and far from conclusive). Should a water control program be determined to be feasible, which would result in any substantial amount of Delta soil being flood free for at least 2 years out of 3, much broader agricultural possibilities could be opened.

Unknowns respecting soil, climate, flooding and community interest should be further investigated for three reasons. Firstly, there is current interest in the agricultural area within the community. Secondly, economic projects might result. Thirdly, considerable social benefits could accrue.

THE PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA AS AN ENTITY AND THE WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

It is the Delta, the Park and to a lesser extent the Lake and nearby waterways which provide the community and people of Fort Chipewyan with much of its uniqueness and upon which a variety of development opportunities rest.

Based upon the information which we have been able to gather, and the opinions of the various biologists, the Peace-Athabasca Delta must clearly be considered as a unique part of the North American environment. It seems quite obvious at this time of environmental concern that responsible authorities are obligated to preserve the Delta as a national asset, particularly due to its importance to migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, and equally important, as an international responsibility under the Migratory Bird Treaty with the United States. Also, as the last relatively undisturbed delta in North America at a

latitude where climatic conditions permit full productivity to take place, its social and economic value cannot be exaggerated.

From the standpoint of the local people, the Delta is seen primarily as a source of muskrat and some fish and moose. However, as the years pass, the uniqueness of the Delta, should it be sustained, will provide a potentially increasing level of economic benefits. In the short-term, the various works-projects and ongoing research should be developed only after full consideration has been given, through discussion with local leaders, to maximum local benefit, involvement and related training. In this regard, emphasis should be given where possible to utilizing the younger people.

The Wood Buffalo National Park is in the same category, in terms of uniqueness, due to its immensity, the buffalo herd and its general wilderness characteristics. The Park also has long-term social and economic significance to the local people. Generally speaking, the policies of the National and Historic Parks Branch which prohibits extractive type activities appears to be highly commendable, with the exception of forestry for at least another 10 - 15 years or so. In this regard, the potential development of oil reserves and gypsum deposits which might have become possible under the proposed Federal/Provincial land trade would not appear desirable. In our opinion, heavy emphasis should be placed by the Cree Band, in negotiating their 93,000 acre land entitlement, on land with potential for tourism, recreation, etc., as opposed to lumber and gypsum. Much further communication and discussion would be required with the Band in order that they could understand and agree with this approach.

In the meantime, the identifiable productivity area available with regard to the Park and the Delta is more permanent and casual

employment for people of the area. Virtually no employment of Fort Chipewyan people exists in connection with the Park at this time. Through communication and planning, between the local people and their organizations, and the Parks Branch, this situation must change. A reasonable goal by 1975 would appear to be at least 10 - 15 men full time, plus temporary people. Much planning, discussion, local communication and involvement and training will be required. It is essential that success be achieved. Again emphasis should be placed on the young.

WILDLIFE

The existence of such species as moose, buffalo, geese, ducks and sport fish provides the basis for a variety of opportunities, of both the consumptive and non-consumptive variety. While hunting and fishing for subsistence purposes will continue to be important to the people as a form of income supplement, the potential for tourist-oriented developments also exists. Such developments could include sport fishing down the Lake, in the rivers of the Delta and on up to a dozen lakes north-east of Fort Chipewyan on the Canadian Shield; a possible goose camp operation within the Park; and conceivably guided hunts for moose and buffalo.

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND RECREATIONAL

Cultural and historical considerations form an important part of the true resource base of the area. Exploitation of this component in order to produce local social and economic benefit will require tourism in a wide variety of forms.

Fort Chipewyan is important ecologically and historically with this importance having been sharpened in the past year or so due to the Bennett Dam controversy. It is an historic site which by virtue

of its relative isolation has retained a greater degree of original content and flavor than one can find in the more highly developed and settled landscape of southern Canada. Ecologically, the scenery of the area includes many lakes, rivers, marshes, islands, sandhills, rock outcrops, forest and grassland. There is a great diversity of wildlife, both mammals and birds, as well as fish and plant life.

Ultimately the full development of the potential of these resources will require roads, passenger boat service, increased fly-in service, campsites and various types of accommodation.

Local benefit, acceptance and participation should be a major criteria for the pace at which development in this area takes place. However, a start should be made upon this at an early date. The types of tourist developments which will be possible here (and here we refer to any development which brings people and money into the area - recreation, education, science, historical, wildlife, hunting, fishing, etc.) are widely varied, as are the local ownership and employment opportunities to be produced. Much discussion, communication, planning and research will have to be done and should be commenced.

SECTION TEN - SPECIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

It is not, therefore, primarily a lack of resources or a lack of regional employment and business opportunities which is mainly responsible for the worsening economic situation facing the people of Fort Chipewyan. Rather, it is the dilemma produced by the increasingly multi-dimensional life style of the people; the increasing desire to control resources without the required management and technical skills; the lack of a sustained, purposeful effort to attract outside investment; the general inability of the local people and their organizations to cope with the external environment; and, the constant confusion which exists between economic and social goals. It is these hurdles that must be cleared in order that meaningful progress be made in Fort Chipewyan and similar communities.

Before proceeding to outline the recommended development plan, some additional planning considerations have been set out here.

THE NEEDS OF NORTH-EASTERN ALBERTA

North-East Alberta, and Fort Chipewyan in particular, includes many native people whose social and economic future is dependent on increasingly coming to a realization of the environment in which they live. This realization must be developed by individuals, by organizations, by leaders, by the young people and by the parents. Should proper steps be initiated now at the community level much progress can be expected by 1990, which is barely more than one generation away.

Major developments such as Syncrude and Great Canadian Oil Sands, which can be very substantial providers of employment must increasingly become part and parcel of the economic outlook of the area's people. Counselling, education, training and mobility will be critical here,

as will interim job opportunities in the home community from the age of 16 onward.

The area's latent resources related to tourism and recreation must also be increasingly understood and taken advantage of. Much outside counsel and planning assistance will be required in this area.

The people need a far greater understanding of government and its programs. A good example of how government-oriented opportunities pass a community such as Fort Chipewyan by is the 1971-72 Local Initiatives Program. Based upon your consultants' knowledge of that program and the community needs of Fort Chipewyan, as many as 15 - 20 men could have obtained employment during the winter for as many as 5 months each, this producing up to \$40,000 in income. There are many other programs and will be in the future which communities such as Fort Chipewyan must exploit fully.

THE NATIVE PEOPLE AS ALBERTANS AND CANADIANS

It is the opinion of your consultants that until such time that tangible economic progress is made by the people of Fort Chipewyan and similar communities, there is little likelihood that many of these native people will see themselves as being Albertans and Canadians. Rather, they will certainly see themselves as primarily native people. While cultural identity must certainly be retained, the indefinite focus of the people on the native identity will keep them out of the mainstream of Canadian life. As each year goes by, it will be increasingly difficult to reverse this trend.

Certainly the native people have many problems to resolve themselves regarding cultural identity and the pace at which the transition in their lives takes place. One of the only answers here is, of course the passage of time. However, as this time is passing, it is your

consultants' opinion that in a town such as Fort Chipewyan several very positive steps can be taken. These are as follows:

- * Ensure the existence of strong, successful, well managed local organizations.
- * Through these organizations, concentrate on putting aside inter-community jealousies and disagreements in the interests of social and economic progress.
- * Also, primarily through these organizations, develop the ability to put forth statements of needs and desires to government bodies through normal channels and learn to work within "the system" rather than follow the "political protest" route so common at present.
- * At all times concentrate on providing the young with meaningful employment and encourage them to continue in school as long as possible. A goal for Fort Chipewyan should be to produce at least one doctor, one lawyer and one engineer by 1980-85, or sooner.

THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector has an important role to play. While it is unrealistic to expect or require a degree of social concern out of line with the economic reality of their business, their co-operation must at all times be enlisted regarding training, allowances for work habits, etc.

The critical need for industries, however small, in communities such as Fort Chipewyan in order that jobs and related training be available in the home community, introduces the need for government to consider moving beyond capital incentives into the area of operating subsidies through a form of social capital on an ongoing basis. In terms of the need and the cost/benefit, this approach appears incapable and entirely justified.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The role of government is critical. It does seem apparent that a revised, fresh approach is needed. In this regard, all the answers

have not emerged from this review of the Fort Chipewyan area. Also, what is desirable at the community level in terms of government impact, may be difficult if not impossible to deal with at the senior administrative and policy level. However, insofar as towns such as Fort Chipewyan are found throughout the Province and Canada, necessary shifts would seem reasonable.

Firstly, government departments at the Federal and Provincial level must work toward achieving the capability of assuming a co-ordinated posture as they relate to Fort Chipewyan. This must be in line with the social and economic needs which have been identified and compiled with local participation.

Secondly, government programming and staffing must become increasingly long-term, particularly in the area of employment, both permanent and semi-permanent (i.e. summer).

Thirdly, day to day interjurisdictional co-ordination must undergo vast improvements, including Federal and Provincial departments, whether or not staff and facilities are located in the community in question. A suitable organization approach will have to be developed here. In the case of Fort Chipewyan, the community's organizations would have to be given the opportunity of approaching whatever body is established and perhaps ultimately participating directly in it.

Fourthly, there is clearly growing need for specially trained, non-departmental-oriented government employees capable of going into communities such as Fort Chipewyan, spending sufficient time to identify opportunity areas which government is in the position to help exploit in some way, and reporting this to those persons in the position to initiate action. It seems clear that neither permanently resident community development officers, nor local employees of individual

departments are capable of either initiating changes at the local level or communicating the need for such changes to those levels, within various departments, where action could conceivably be initiated.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY DEFINED

The definition of socio-economic opportunity which we have utilized in this review, and which is reflected by the various recommendations which we have made is as follows:

"Any development, change, improvement, opportunity or concept which, if after having been communicated to local organizations or individuals, could be exploited in order to ultimately produce a positive influence on the lives of the people, whether in social or economic terms, or perhaps both."

During the process of communicating the findings and recommendations of this report to the local community, some discussion on just what types of things constitute social and economic progress will be necessary.

SECTION ELEVEN - SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE PEACE- ATHABASCA DELTA AND LAKE ATHABASCA REGION

Against the background of the information presented thus far, this section outlines the broad goals and specific objectives which we believe to be appropriate for the study area and its people during the period 1971 - 1980. Immediate, short-term and longer-term opportunities are specifically outlined as well. The last part of the Section deals with implementation and evaluation considerations.

BROAD GOALS FOR THE AREA AND ITS PEOPLE

The broad goals which our review leads us to conclude should be adopted by the community and its organizations, as well as by Federal and Provincial government departments insofar as their policies and programs affect the area, are relatively easy to identify. The difficulty, which must not be underestimated, lies in implementing and sustaining the specific steps necessary to move toward the realization of these goals.

Overriding the goal areas listed below is the basic goal of planning and achieving an improved, diversified, more stable economic base for the people of the area, primarily resident. Major short-term permanent relocation of individuals and/or family units is not particularly desirable, either in social or economic terms. The transition taking place in the lives of these people can not be achieved until much progress is made in this regard. The Canadian Eskimo provides a good example.

In the space of less than a decade, Canada's 12,000 Eskimos have gone through a tremendous life style shift from the traditional trapline, dog team, subsistence existence to an almost urban life including houses, electricity, schools, etc. On the surface, this

transition is making excellent progress. However, the key will be to ensure that income producing employment opportunities develop in the required numbers and locations, within both industry and government. Should this not be achieved, the successful transition will be indefinitely delayed with the directly related social attitudes that are so commonly held by many of Canada's Indians.

Both the Indians and Eskimos are adaptable people. They subsisted from the land prior to the white man's coming. After the white man came, they began to trap in order to obtain money and trade goods. In order to obtain the obviously desirable comforts and benefits of more urban life, including welfare, they then moved away from the trapping and continue to do so. It is now indicated that should meaningful opportunities for employment exist in or near their community they will most certainly want to obtain these economic benefits. The short-term problems associated with the stereotype commonly held regarding native work attitudes are generally over-estimated and will not be significant in the face of continuing employment opportunities under sound management direction. At any rate, the prospect of such difficulties does not alter the logic of and need for the opportunities to be developed.

Through all of this, the key thing which must be remembered and allowed for is that the leaders and individuals in communities such as Fort Chipewyan do not yet have the required planning, organizational, financial, marketing and technical expertise to develop these opportunities. Perhaps the one thing that these people must learn is when and how to go about using people within government, industry or professional firms in order to achieve their objectives.

More specifically, the twenty-six broad goals which we believe the community of Fort Chipewyan should work toward achieving over the next 10 years, in conjunction with government and industry are set out below under eleven categories:

Local Organizations

1. Continual strengthening of all local community or business organizations such as the Cree/Chipewyan Band, the Local Advisory Committee, the Metis Association Local, the C. M. C. Co-operative, the Handicraft Guild, the Fishermen's Co-operative, etc.
2. Improved co-ordination and co-operation of local organizations in order to accelerate and maximize community progress, particularly where relationships with the Provincial and Federal government departments and industry are concerned. Common understanding and general agreement regarding community goals would be vital in this regard.
3. Introduction of new local organizations, particularly for purposes of labor force mobilization, specific business undertakings, relationships with government and the general external environment, skill training and specific social or economic projects.

Traditional Economic Areas

4. Reversal of the downward trend in exploitation of the region's fur values. Ultimately, in order to optimize the management of this traditional resource there should be substantially fewer trappers, producing at or near historical levels. (Major short and medium progress in developing other economic opportunities will reduce both the feasibility and even the desirability of achieving this goal.)
5. Establishment of a viable locally-based commercial fishery, perhaps including winter operations, through the Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative.
6. Maintenance of current local impact from Swanson Lumber forestry operations, despite relocation of mill to Embarass area.

7. Revitalization of local handicraft industry, thus providing opportunities for girls and women to generate much needed income.

Regional Employment Opportunities

8. Maximization of seasonal and full time regional employment opportunities which can and will develop over time with such operations as Eldorado Nuclear, Mokta (Canada) Ltd., Syncrude, Great Canadian Oil Sands, Swanson Lumber, Northern Transportation, etc. (This to be achieved through locally based vocational counselling, sustained levels of good information, skill training, and improved mobility opposite specific opportunities.)
9. Development of increased awareness, again on a sustained basis and particularly among the young people, of career opportunities in the resource-based industries of Northern Canada.

Government Programs

10. Annually increased levels of local employment, both permanent and seasonal, with Federal and Provincial government departments having programs and operations in the area. (This to be achieved through improved, sustained senior level understanding of local needs, in turn leading to re-design of existing positions, creation of new jobs and custom-tailored programs, on-the-job training, and revised recruitment policies.
11. Constantly upgraded ability on the part of local organizations to understand and take advantage of government works projects, training programs, incentives and grants, housing and other such programs.
12. Maximization of local labor content of all local or regional works projects, such as those being undertaken by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. (This to involve the possible establishment of one or more new organizations.)

Industrial and Business Development

13. Establishment of at least one secondary manufacturing or processing facility in Fort Chipewyan by 1975

14. Establishment of such local business services as can be justified by the local market or by the training and/or social values produced. Local ownership of enterprises to be fostered wherever possible.

Tourism, Recreation and Related

15. Development of a comprehensive, long-term plan for the exploitation of the substantial historical, tourism and recreational potential of the area. (Critical here will be the involvement of local people, organizations and leaders. Clearly, any pace of such development which exceeds the ability of the local community to understand, participate and hence benefit, is too fast.)
16. Short-term mounting of pilot-projects related to fishing, hunting and wilderness camping.

Education and Training

17. Creation of a comprehensive, locally-based vocational counselling capability. (This to be achieved through appropriately trained vocational counsellors of the "educational technician" type being utilized in the Lesser Slave Lake area.)
18. Maximum development of locally-based, on-the-job training situations, initially primarily in the government sector.
19. Availability of leadership training for young people in the form of supervised community betterment programs such as those available under the Federal Government's 1971 "Opportunity for Youth" program.
20. Development and operation of local, skill-training vocational facility, at such time that there are local employment opportunities available requiring the skills to be taught.

Local Facilities and Services

21. Ultimate development of a "government centre" building which would serve as the focus for local government, other government departments, etc. (This to be achieved ideally through the Local Advisory Committee.)

22. Upgrading of local National Health and Welfare Nursing Station to hospital status in line with that Department's stated objectives for communities such as Fort Chipewyan.
23. Obtaining of television service at the earliest possible date.

Social Assistance

24. Early development of a more realistic and flexible approach to the administration of social assistance wherein incentive to work is not legitimately nullified by the availability of welfare.

Access to Area by Land

25. Development of winter road and ultimately all-weather road access directly from the south to the Fort Chipewyan and Peace-Athabasca Delta area.

Agriculture

26. Continuation of diversified research into the various agricultural and related possibilities which may exist in the area now and in the future. (This to be carried out with full local participation under the supervision of either Federal or Provincial government agricultural specialists.

SPECIFIC ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

We have chosen to use man months of employment as the unit through which to express what appear to be reasonable and achievable specific economic objectives for the study area during the period stretching to 1980.

While these objectives have been developed in line with population and labor force projections (i.e. estimated minimum 2,000 local people by 1980 producing a male labor force of between 450 and 500, plus females, a large percentage of which will be young and very much part of the labor force), they have at the same time been developed in line with what appears to be economically possible and justifiable, as well

as socially desirable.

Factors which will naturally effect the validity of these objectives and the capability of the community achieving them will be varied. Obviously anything which affects population in either direction from the assumed future levels will require that adjustments be made. The labor force participation rate will be an additional factor. The progress made by local organizations will also be critical, as will the progress made in training programs, innovative mobility concepts, and the "go or no-go" of various proposed resource-based projects such as Syncrude and Mokta. A final, and perhaps the most important factor influencing the validity of these goals will be the ability of government at all levels to assume a more constructive, co-ordinated and long-term posture and translate this posture into action at the local level.

Chart XIII represents what appears to be reasonably attainable regarding the development of employment, economic diversity and expanded vocational opportunity in and around Fort Chipewyan by 1980. The reasoning behind each category is elaborated upon in the following sections. Suffice to say, however, that despite the reasonableness of attaining the approximate goal set out in man-months of employment for each category, the challenge to the emerging capability of local organizations, the community as a whole and all involved government departments is very great.

Should such a level of economic growth and performance be achieved, despite the growth in the labor force, an improved overall utilization level of 40% would nevertheless be achieved. Utilizing \$500 per month as the average wage level by 1980, this would produce in excess of \$900,000 annual in productively generated income. As

indicated previously, a substantial level of transfer payments and social assistance would still be required to sustain the community. However, such a level of performance would have to be considered highly satisfactory.

As each year goes by, as is the case with all forecasts, revisions will be required. Also, progress can be monitored, in the light of current, more accurate information on the labor force, specific economic conditions and trends, etc. The monitoring and related follow-up action which takes place in connection with this planning process is, in the opinion of your consultants, the type of socio-economic "community development" which can pay-off for communities such as Fort Chipewyan in the 1970's.

On Chart XIII, where the actual timing of the growth of the specific employment category is too difficult to predict, we have simply indicated arrows pointing to the ultimate, reasonably attainable performance level by 1980.

CHART XIII - EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVES AND LABOR FORCE UTILIZATION TO 1980

Economic Target Areas	As of 1971	1972	1973	1974 ¹	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Change Since 1971
Male Labor Force	367	380	395	410	425	440	455	470	485	500	+133
Total Labor Force ¹	460	475	494	513	531	572	592	611	630	650	+190
Total Potential Employee Months	5520	5700	5930	6150	6360	6860	7100	7330	7560	7800	+2280
Percentage Utilization	24%									40%	+16%
. Fur Industry ²	270									400	+130
. Handicrafts	N/A	12								50	+50
. Commercial Fishing ²	25									125	+100
. Forestry and Related	376									400	+24
. Mining and Related (Regional)	37	50	60	70	75	80	90	100	110	120	+83
. Agriculture and Related	NIL	6	12	12	20					36	+36
. Construction (Including Road Building and Maintenance)	12	36	50	50	50	75	75	75	90	100	+88
. Permanent Government Employment ³ (Federal and Provincial)	195	231	267	303	339	375	411	447	483	519	+324
. Semi-Permanent Government Employment	12	30								60	+48
. Local Government Employment (Municipal Level)	6	9	12	18	24	24	24	24	30	36	+30
. Summer Employment (Students Working Locally as Well as Outside)	6	40	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	+54
. Tourism and Related	NIL	24	36	48	60					120	+120
. Regional Resource - Based Employment	12									120	+108
. Other Outside Employment	NIL									60	+60
. Government Financed Works Project ⁵	12	150								60	+48
. Local Services and Businesses	290									480	+190
. Secondary Manufacturing and/or Processing (Includes Planning and Development)	NIL	3	6	24	150					300	+300
. Local Organizations (Primarily the Cree/Chip Band)	62									94	+32
TOTAL	1315 ⁴									3140	+1825

Footnotes for Chart XIII

1. Total labor force includes female participants - 25% of male total 1971-75 and 30% 1976-80.
2. \$400 per month assumed as 1 man-month equivalent in 1971. In 1980, \$500 per month assumed.
3. Three additional, full man-years assumed to be added and sustained over the entire period within the government sector.
4. Somewhat higher than the 1255 man-months mentioned earlier in the report to allow for certain contingencies.
5. The 150 man-months shown under Government Works Projects in 1972 reflects the employment of P.A.D.P. works projects, including the possibility of winter road preparation.

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVES
AND LABOUR FORCE
UTILIZATION TO 1980

CHART 13

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES

The economic performance set out in the form of man-months and labor force utilization objectives in Chart XIII is made up of a large number of target areas each complicated and challenging in its own right.

Utilizing the same basic categories as in Chart XIII, this section and the two which follow concerning the medium and long-term opportunities, sets out in more precise terms the nature of the opportunities, steps which should be taken and by whom, as well as cost and related considerations where they can be estimated.

Virtually all categories referred to in Chart XIII are referred to as well in this section dealing with immediate opportunities. This is due to the fact that action of some sort is required in each category during 1972. The key to medium and long-term opportunities is to sustain and carry forward activities initiated during the period of the next 1 - 2 years. Well initiated, short-term activities should have a sort of snow ball, cumulative effect during the balance of the decade.

Fur Industry (400 Man-Months equivalent and
 \$200,000 net income by 1980)

The basic opportunity in the traditional area of fur trapping is to sustain the economic impact of fur production at or near historical levels. In order that this resource be more optimally managed during the balance of the decade, action should be taken in the immediate future in the following areas:

- * Formation of local trappers' organization.
- * Upgraded statistical data on all facets of area fur production.
- * Review legislation and trapline management policies within the Park and Alberta sectors.

- * Development of terms of reference for feasibility review of controlled muskrat production in suitable sections of Delta, probably outside the Park.

The long-term market demand for furs appears assured, although prices will undoubtedly continue to fluctuate. In particular, muskrat will continue in good demand as a major fun-fur material. A trappers' organization is required in Fort Chipewyan for a wide variety of reasons which basically boil down to ensuring the local people have a vehicle through which to make their views known, receive information, hold discussions with government and generally move toward a situation in which the production of furs can be carried out on an economical, profitable basis for years to come.

In order for fur production to continue and even grow as a source of meaningful local income, all other employment categories will have to be set up in such a way that the time required for the serious trappers to do their trapping is actually available to them and that they are not effectively disqualified from other opportunities by taking time off.

Major responsibility for ensuring the maintenance of the fur production component of the local economy rests with the Provincial and Federal Government (Parks Branch). Legislative, research, administrative, technical and financial inputs will be required.

Progress made in other areas of Fort Chipewyan's economy will obviously effect the feasibility, and even the need, to sustain fur production. It is indicated, however, that a level of progress and diversification sufficient to minimize the importance of fur production is highly improbable.

Commercial Fishing

(125 Man-Months equivalent and
\$50,000 net income by 1980)

Lake Athabasca's Alberta portion gives every indication of being capable of supporting an economical fishery, the major species in the short-term being the walleye. Both summer and winter fishing appears feasible, the latter being dependent on the development and maintenance of a winter road into the Fort Chipewyan area from the south.

The fledgling local Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative requires well co-ordinated assistance and encouragement. In this regard, it would be helpful if the number of government agencies with whom they must deal could be reduced. Management, organizational and planning considerations require careful attention. Technical and legislative inputs from government may also be required. The development of closer relationships with Co-operative Fisheries Ltd. of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan are highly desirable in the short-term. This organization is managing the processing facilities at the Gunnar site and is capable of introducing management and technical expertise due to the nature of their overall operations.

Provided that the Athabasca Fishermen's Co-operative makes progress in the planning and management of its affairs, financial assistance from government in both grant and loan form appears well justified.

Forestry and Related

(400 Man-Months and \$200,000
in income by 1980)

The basic objective in this category is to sustain the current local impact from forestry, despite the relocation of the Swanson mill to the Embarass area south of Fort Chipewyan. This mill will in all likelihood continue operations until 1980, and probably longer. Aside from ensuring that the relocation of the mill does not result in lower

employment levels due to poorer access from Fort Chipewyan, there is not too much that can be done to ensure that Swanson Lumber continue to utilize local men at previous levels. Wherever possible, however, the various government-sponsored training subsidies should be taken advantage of within the Swanson operation. Hopefully, total employment could expand as a result of this. It is indicated that much benefit could accrue locally should good communication exist between Swanson Lumber and an appropriate local organization respecting the need for and availability of labor and skills of various types.

It appears unreasonable for the Cree Band to anticipate receiving lumbering privileges in the Park as a result of their land entitlement negotiations.

Mining and Related

(120 Man-Months and \$60,000
income by 1980)

Mining exploration and production of minerals is the basic industry of Northern Canada. At present, little or no participation is being achieved by local people in this industry. In the immediate future, Mokta (Canada) Ltd. appears to offer the best potential opportunity. The possibility exists that an open-pit uranium mine could be developed at Cluff Lake by Mokta during the late 1970's. Eldorado Nuclear offers the other possibility, with improved mobility being necessary in this regard.

Commencing in 1972, with a solid local effort to maximize employment opportunities at Mokta, there appears to be no reason why the mining and related activity which in all likelihood will take place in the Fort Chipewyan area in the next 8 years can not produce a level of 10 man years by 1980. The key will be for some appropriate local organization to maintain open lines of communication with mining

firms. Training will also be a factor, particularly in terms of increasing the skill content and wage return from the types of jobs held by local people.

Agriculture

(36 Man-Months and \$8,000
income by 1980)

A variety of interesting possibilities exist in the agricultural area. Discussions should be held with Provincial and Federal agricultural personnel regarding the commencement of a suitable research program, this to involve as many local individuals as possible.

Construction (including roads) (100 Man-Months and \$50,000
income by 1980)

It is difficult to predict the potential local impact of general and road construction. It is indicated, however, that new housing, local facilities, home improvement activity, road maintenance and general development accompanying population growth and increased tourism will support a modest but growing level of economic impact in construction. In the short-term, this will be spurred by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Projects being carried out.

The key to ensuring that the apparent potential of this category is in fact achieved will be the development of a small core group of individuals having the skills required. Ultimately, a small locally owned and operated contracting firm, having suitable equipment for the work available in the area would be desirable. In the short-term, the most realistic approach is to endeavor to ensure that a by-product of the works presently being carried out on the Delta by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project is a crew of construction workers. Some appropriate form of organization should be developed in order that a contract labor crew of 20 - 30 men could be maintained in the

community on an ongoing basis. Potential users of labor in the general area would then be in the position to contact and make arrangements for specific types and amounts of manpower.

Handicrafts

(50 Man-Months and \$20,000
income by 1980)

Utilizing modern marketing practices, the economic performance possible by 1980 may well exceed the \$20,000 of net income shown above. However, the depressed level of handicraft production which currently prevails and the uncertainty of available moose hide and other materials indicates that at this point the estimated potential should be very conservative.

Early in 1972, a review should be carried out, in conjunction with the Local Handicraft Guild, of the potential of this industry in Fort Chipewyan. Developed properly over time, considerable potential is indicated, producing both economic and social benefits.

Permanent Government Employment (519 Man-Months and \$260,000
(Federal and Provincial) income by 1980)

This is a critical area. Failure to mount the effort required to achieve success in this category will have adverse implications for the other target areas as well. A large number of Federal and Provincial Departments (several on a multi-branch basis) have personnel, facilities and programs in the Fort Chipewyan area. It is probable that this will increase rather than decrease in coming years. Based upon our appraisal of the current and potential future scope of these departments, it is not unrealistic for an objective of substantially increased and sustained permanent government employment to be pursued. At a minimum, three permanent jobs per year should be developed and sustained. Insofar as it should be anticipated that over the years some individuals will develop sufficient mobility to move away from

Fort Chipewyan with the particular department, the key is that the positions themselves must be permanent. When a position becomes vacant, other local individuals would have the opportunity of filling the position.

Early in 1972, steps should be taken to ensure that all involved departments understand the significance and implications of this recommendation. As much as anything, this opportunity area symbolizes the altered posture which appears to be in the best long-term interests of government vis-a-vis communities such as Fort Chipewyan.

Local Government Employment

(36 Man-Months and \$18,000
income by 1980)

The Local Advisory Committee is a creature of the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs. One person presently works part-time in connection with the local water services.

It appears highly desirable, from a variety of standpoints, that the local government of Fort Chipewyan move as quickly as possible to the point where a permanent, salaried Administrator is recruited. Discussions between the Local Advisory Committee and the Department of Municipal Affairs should be initiated early in 1972.

Virtually every area in which economic and social progress is to be pursued is going to require someone with a total community orientation to be involved in communication, administration, relationships with government, etc. Existing organizations are set up on racial lines, a fact which introduces many complications.

It is recommended that despite the inadequacies inherent in the tax base of Fort Chipewyan serious consideration be given to upgrading the local government structure to include a qualified, permanent

administrative employee at the earliest possible date. The Local Advisory Committee and the Department of Municipal Affairs, in making their selection, should not give special preference to a local person. Competence and suitability should be the criteria.

Summer Employment (Students working <u>locally and outside)</u>	(60 Man-Months and \$30,000 income by 1980)
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The importance of bringing the community's youth into the economic mainstream must be recognized immediately and steps taken. It is considered feasible and highly desirable that a minimum of 30 teenagers obtain two months of summer employment each year. A variety of government programs are, and will probably continue to be available to support such projects.

Should planning be commenced now for the summer of 1972, it would appear very feasible to develop opportunities in Fort Chipewyan for at least 15 youths. A wide variety of community projects could easily be identified.

Planning should also commence during early 1972 for carrying out of a summer employment project "outside" of Fort Chipewyan, perhaps in some larger regional community or in Edmonton. A fairly substantial extra cost (i.e. \$5,000 for counselling and related, \$1,500 for transportation, \$5,000 for room and board) would be involved here. However, carefully mounted and sustained over the period to 1980, such a program could produce a wide variety of positive social benefits.

Tourism and related

(120 Man-Months and \$60,000
income by 1980)

The effective exploitation of the tourism and recreational potential of the wilderness within which Fort Chipewyan is situated symbolizes perhaps more than anything else the very difficult tran-

sition which must be achieved by the local people if they are to enjoy an independent, decent and improving life style, while retaining their residence in Fort Chipewyan.

No attempt has been made in this report to document all the possible future dimensions of tourism in the area, insofar as at this point in time it would serve no particular purpose.

A rather modest goal has been established for this category, taking into consideration the fact that no activity is presently taking place in this activity area. Without too much difficulty, though not without fairly considerable investment it should clearly be possible to produce the equivalent of 10 man-years in the tourism category by 1980.

Presently, non-camping type of tourism is restricted by the lack of accommodation for visitors in Fort Chipewyan. In this regard, it is to be hoped that the Fort Chipewyan Motel might be expanded somewhat in 1972. Efforts are now being made by the local Band to purchase this operation, and this is a desirable development. Very great caution must, however, be paid to management considerations by the prospective operators.

During early 1972, it is recommended that the feasibility of pilot-type fly-in fishing be fully investigated. Tent camps situated at the several proven sport fishing lakes north-east of Fort Chipewyan could provide an accommodation alternative to staying in Fort Chipewyan and flying in each day. Pilot projects should also be investigated for guided moose and wildfowl hunting. With regard to the latter, and particularly in connection with geese, National Park policy would have to be fully examined and discussed. Finally, also during 1972, suitable Lake Athabasca frontage should be examined in

terms of the feasibility of establishing a small-scale, wilderness-type summer cottage operation. It is indicated there may be a small, specialized current market as close as Edmonton for such facilities. One further project which might be planned during 1972 and carried out in 1973 would be an organized Winter Carnival.

With regard to the need for facilities development in and around Fort Chipewyan, in order that tourism can in fact take place, local organizations should not reject the concept of outside investment. In reality, the opposite should be the case.

Regional Resource-Based Employment (120 Man-Months and \$60,000 income by 1980)

Progress by the local people in taking advantage of training and employment opportunities such as those available in conjunction with the development of the Athabasca Tar Sands is essential between now and 1980. It is to be hoped that the young people in particular, better educated and less desirous of trapping and fishing, will move in this direction.

In order that progress in this direction be made it is recommended that an appropriate local organization take on the task of communicating with Canada Manpower, Great Canadian Oil Sands and Syncrude Ltd. in this regard. Insofar as a regularly scheduled airline flies three times weekly north and south of Fort Chipewyan, the feasibility of short-term commuting to and from Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray deserves careful analysis in 1972.

The objective of 10 man-years by 1980 does not seem unreasonable.

Government Works Projects(60 Man-Months and \$30,000
income by 1980)

The definite possibility does exist of considerable local employment, during the early part of 1972, under the umbrella of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. Water control measures and a possible winter road project, possibly funded under the Federal Local Initiatives Program are two areas likely to generate an abnormally high level of employment.

As in the case of Construction, it is highly desirable that an appropriate local organization exist which is capable of relating local labor and skills to the wide variety of works projects which so often can be mounted in communities and areas such as Fort Chipewyan. It is highly desirable, as was stated previously, that the local capability of mobilizing Fort Chipewyan's human resources be developed as a by-product of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project.

Local Services and Businesses(480 Man-Months and \$240,000
income by 1980)

The opportunity does exist for the expansion and addition of certain additional services and businesses in Fort Chipewyan. While the attainment of the employment and income objectives set out above will depend heavily on the multiplier effect produced by success in other categories, a start on several specific possibilities should be made in 1972. This includes the expansion of the motel and restaurant (particularly applicable should this enterprise be purchased by the Athabasca Cree and Chip Band); the possible introduction of some form of credit union; a small bakery; a mechanical, automotive and general repair service; a medical practice; a water taxi and small marina; and, a small guiding service. Mentioned previously was the upgrading of the nursing station to hospital status and the establishment of a

locally-based development corporation to investigate the feasibility of constructing a building and leasing space to government departments.

All of the above developments appear feasible from an economic standpoint and are desirable socially, The actual achievement of all of these possibilities could produce the following additional employment:

* Expansion of Fort Chipewyan Motel and Restaurant	- 24 Months New Local Employment
* Small local bakery	- 18 Months New Local Employment
* Repair and related service	- 12 Months New Local Employment
* Credit Union	- 6 Months New Local Employment
* Water Taxi and Marina	- 9 Months New Local Employment
* Guiding Service	- 6 Months New Local Employment
* Medical practice and expanded nursing station	- 12 Months New Local Employment
	—
	87 Months New Local Employment
	=

The income which might be generated by each development would be variable, however, in total it would probably exceed \$30,000.

The difficulty of the actual process of achieving these developments in Fort Chipewyan should not be underestimated. Government inputs, both advisory and financial, will be required, as will, in all probability the services of private consulting firms. A major barrier in a community such as Fort Chipewyan is to identify suitable individuals, families, organizations or other vehicles who are willing and able to become involved in the process of actually trying to achieve the individual developments which appear to be possible from an economic standpoint. In addition, the management skills are often absent or inadequate. In this regard, outside counsel and "handholding" will be

vital, both at the development stage and on an ongoing basis to ensure satisfactory operations.

Secondary manufacturing and/or
Processing

(300 Man-Months employment
and \$150,000 income by 1980)

There is every indication that an industry, secondary in nature, is feasible in Fort Chipewyan and the planning for the development of an appropriate manufacturing or processing facility should be commenced in 1972. The growing labor force, the employment and training needs of the young people, the high and rising levels of social assistance and the need for local, first phase industrial exposure all point to an attractive cost-benefit ratio from the government viewpoint in terms of the capital and operating incentives which would in all likelihood be required to attract private investment.

Located as it is on the Pacific Western Airlines north-south route, many manufacturing possibilities may exist for a production facility located in Fort Chipewyan. The oil, gas, pipeline, transportation and mining industries unquestionably provide a host of opportunities.

A private consultant should be retained and be given a two year mandate to work with and for the Local Advisory Committee and the Province of Alberta's Department of Industry. A fee level of between \$7,500 and \$15,000 for each of the two years would be satisfactory in our opinion for a qualified firm to bring the actual development of a local Fort Chipewyan industry very close to reality by 1974. A minimum of two years must be allowed insofar as time must be allowed for the consultant to communicate effectively with the local, government and private sector on a wide variety of social, economic, financial and policy matters. Useful side benefits would accrue, over the period.

to local organizations insofar as they participated in and actually became aware of the complexity and realities of the development process.

It might be suggested that a government employee, having a specific industrial development mandate, be assigned to the task, either from a location at Fort Chipewyan or Edmonton. Our exposure to the situation leads us to reject this approach in favor of a contract with a competent, outside consultant.

MEDIUM-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

The reality of the future of the Fort Chipewyan area and its people is really quite simple in economic terms. The short-term opportunities outlined previously, will still be the short-term opportunities in 1975, to the extent that effective action is not initiated and sustained commencing in the immediate future.

Clearly, insofar as the downward trends in the renewable resource categories of fur, fish, and forest are not stopped and in fact reversed, the need for progress in the new and diversified employment target areas will be that much greater in order for the same economic performance to be achieved by the community's labor force.

If a meeting of the leaders and citizens of Fort Chipewyan was to be convened at the present time to discuss the future of Fort Chipewyan and the developments which should be striven for by 1975 several important factors would manifest themselves. They are listed here due to their relevance to the prospects and opportunities of Fort Chipewyan in the mid-1970's.

1. Substantial developments such as gypsum mining, large scale locally-owned and operated lumbering, a new townsite on Reserve 201, a substantial agricultural industry, tourism in a variety of forms and a secondary manufacturing industry would dominate discussion.

2. Limited attention would be paid to the potential significance of taking whatever steps were required to reverse the downward trends evident in fur and fish production and in forestry wage employment.
3. The significance of mining related employment, agricultural research, mobilizing effectively for varieties of labor intensive activities such as construction and roadbuilding, handicraft production, increasing sustained levels of government employment, small scale pilot projects in tourism, job opportunities for youth, increased mobility for future regional opportunities and the other short-term opportunities mentioned above would receive little attention.
4. Certainly, there would very likely not be any discussion at all directed towards specific goals, over specific time periods. It is evident that neither local government employees, nor local leaders, are prone to think or plan in such terms. Yet, such an approach is a necessity for a community such as Fort Chipewyan if progress is to be made and sustained.
5. Little specific reference would be made to the quality of economic opportunity. And yet, there seems to be an underlying belief in the minds of the people and the leaders that ownership of enterprises is the only manner in which decent wages and conditions of employment can be achieved. Thus, in concentrating on locally-owned ventures it will have been assumed that meaningful, quality employment can not be obtained with government, regional resource-based operators, etc. This belief will only change when it ceases to be generally true.
6. Having identified a specific development deemed to be desirable for the community, those involved in this hypothetical meeting would in all likelihood devise a plan of action substantially out of line with the real requirements. In addition, the follow-up necessary to carry out the plan would also very likely be lacking very substantially. (It is important to stress again at this point the monumental difficulty which so often faces an unorganized community such as Fort Chipewyan in setting, pursuing and actually achieving some specific community objective.) Clearly, the ability at the local level to bring together the roles and responsibilities of local organizations, local government, senior government departments at

various levels, and private consultants in order to achieve community objectives simply does not exist.

Thus, the leaders and people of Fort Chipewyan appear to place inappropriate amounts of importance on the various opportunities available to it in the coming years. Certainly, there is insufficient awareness of the manner in which the community might move toward a condition of economic diversity. There is a tendency to look excessively inward towards potential local opportunities, as opposed to outwards toward the emerging regional opportunities. And to use very harsh terms, there is virtual ignorance of the processes by which specific economic objectives might be planned and achieved.

Consequently, your consultants feel bound to state that it would be worthless, and even harmful, at this point in time, to actually pin-point the types of developments which might be feasible toward the middle and late 1970's. Already mentioned have been such goals as a well managed fishery; a local secondary industry; expansion of tourism as facilities, finance and marketing permits; the development of new and healthier local services and businesses (locally owned where possible); increasing, sustained and meaningful government employment; a locally-based vocational training facility geared to generate skills applicable to local and regional opportunities; and, more specifically, a hospital and "government-centre" building.

More important, however, and in fact inherent in the process of accomplishing the above, will be the development and strengthening of local organizations and the local government process in particular; the development of a co-ordinated, constructive posture by the Federal and Provincial governments; and, the increasing understanding and effective use of outside, professional counsel by the community.

LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

As the community of Fort Chipewyan moves toward 1980, 1990 and beyond, its people will either become increasingly capable of looking after themselves economically or it appears that they will be well on the way towards participation in a social tragedy. Naturally, the same holds true for many native and white Canadians elsewhere who for a combination of reasons may be poor, untrained and immobile. In fact, there is considerable evidence that a large and increasing number of Canadians have many of the same economic problems as those facing the native people of Fort Chipewyan.

Starting in 1972, and moving at a pace which can be sustained by the community, the process of planning, implementing, following-up and monitoring the developments which are in fact feasible and socially desirable should be commenced.

At a time when governments may well be less financially capable of investing "social capital" in projects with long-term pay-out than was previously the case, it is naturally to be anticipated that the community of Fort Chipewyan will encounter difficulty. Unquestionably, it is essential that local communities become more capable of expressing their needs in "cost-benefit" terms. Similarly, senior levels of government must become more adept at planning local level inputs on the same basis.

In more specific terms, it should be stated that one thing stands out related to the long-term opportunities facing Fort Chipewyan. This critical factor is the preservation of the natural environment manifested in the form of the Park, the Delta, the area's lakes and rivers, the air, water, wildlife and general esthetics. Without these things the reason for the continued existence of Fort Chipewyan would

certainly be gone. And in addition, the continent would have lost a valuable, irreplaceable asset.

LOCAL COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

It is essential to the process of socio-economic development in a community that those persons involved have appropriate knowledge of the broad goals, specific opportunities, individual roles and responsibilities, etc. In the case of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project and Fort Chipewyan, it is safe to say that much of what has gone on during 1971 under the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project auspices will not have been seen to have much significance for the local community, except for the wages which have been generated locally at various times. It is most unlikely that the local organizations are clear on the nature of the socio-economic review which has been carried out. The two critical factors which are required now, in order that the work of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project become meaningful to the communities, are communication and implementation.

These two factors are inseparable. Unless it is intended by the various levels of government involved in Fort Chipewyan to undertake, jointly with the community and its organizations, a ten-year planning and development program, there is little value, and perhaps some harm, in communicating locally information such as presented in the report. At the same time, it would be equally inappropriate for all or part of the recommended development program to be implemented without first going through a process of local communication, feedback, etc.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of such communication, it would appear highly appropriate that the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project undertake to initiate preliminary discussions with selected Provincial

and Federal government departmental personnel, obtaining commitments from these departments wherever possible. In this way, the community level communication and discussion can be followed up with tangible action without a long time lag. Such a time lag can cripple a development program's credibility

Local communication

Large, "town-hall type" meetings is not the way to introduce the findings and recommendations of a report such as this one in a community such as Fort Chipewyan. In fact, such an approach, bearing in mind the composition of the town and its organizations, could be very harmful. The recommended approach would be for a representative of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project, using resource personnel as required, to be charged with the responsibility of arranging discussions to be held with the various leaders, local organizations, etc.

These discussions should be structured in such a way that the local people are presented with the general findings and recommendations of the study and encouraged to comment in whatever way they deem appropriate. Careful record should be retained covering such meetings and discussions, although formal minutes should always be avoided.

In line with previous reference to the importance and desirability of upgrading and expanding the process of local government as soon as possible, it is recommended that the Local Advisory Committee be the central organization through which community level discussion takes place. This is not to suggest that the two other major organizations, the Athabasca Cree and Chipewyan Band and the Metis Association, would not be involved. On the contrary, their leaders and spokesmen must be involved. However, it is more than clear that only through a vehicle such as the Local Advisory Committee, can broad community

objectives be discussed and action initiated.

It should be anticipated that the initial process of local communication and discussion might require as much as three to four months at a minimum, in order to allow the effective participation of local organizations, who will naturally wish to hold some discussions within themselves. Fundamental to this whole process is the need to make available to local people and their organizations a resource person capable of communicating clearly and effectively with them on matters pertaining to the approved recommendations of this review. The availability of such a person will, in fact, strongly influence the extent to which the community will identify with and support the program and its objectives.

Implementation

A tentative, short-term implementation plan, covering the period to 1975, has been prepared and is shown as Chart XIV. The process of communication referred to above as well as preliminary discussions with senior governments have been included. Responsibilities, both individual and those shared by two or more parties to the development process, have been indicated.

It should naturally be anticipated that on-going discussion will result in the need to alter the timing and responsibility factors, as well as the actual steps. Therefore, this plan should be considered as preliminary.

It is also realized that there may be a significant time lapse until such time as the recommendations of this report are in fact approved by the Technical Advisory Committee and ultimately those responsible for policy determination by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. It has been assumed, however, that the Director will be in

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LEGEND

P.A.D.P. Peace-Athabasca Delta Project
L.A.C. Local Advisory Committee
CONS. Outside Consultant
FED. Federal Government
PROV. Provincial Government
LOCAL Various Local Organizations
A.F.C. Athabasca Fishermen's Co-op
FWMB Fresh Water Fish Marketing Board
P.N.O. Possible New Organization
H.G. Handicraft Guild
L.T.O. Local Trappers Organization
M.A.L. Metis Association Local
A.C.C.B. Athabasca Cree/Chip Band

■ SPECIFIC STEP
■ SUSTAINED ACTION

the position to move ahead on most aspects without significant delay.

Some additional comments are provided here to clarify the specific content and assumptions underlying the implementation plan.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta Project is shown as a participant in the majority of the 44 steps listed. The intent here is to indicate that at a minimum the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project should become involved in initiating discussion with the appropriate organizations and government departments. With particular reference to Planning Categories A, B and C it is intended that a fairly major involvement be undertaken by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project personnel. It is also anticipated that the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project may retain outside consulting services in order to initiate action within the various areas.

It might be noted that the Local Advisory Committee has been allotted a major role in the process of implementation. This is in line with step 13 which recommends the Provincial Government support a program whereby the actual local government process would be upgraded. A permanent, salaried Administrator would ideally be recruited in this regard. Implicit in this recommendation is our conclusion that considerable difficulty is apt to be encountered should the Indian Band and the Metis Association become the major vehicles for development planning. A community, rather than a racial orientation, is required in order for the potential progress to actually be achieved. These organizations will obviously retain an involvement in economic matters, financing, etc. However, a generally positive trend may well be for them to move steadily in the direction of social programs.

Steps 16, 18 and 19 all refer to a Possible New Organization. Some discussion has already taken place regarding a Local Skills Company, to act as a mobilizing organization for local and regional

works projects. A "transportation company" which might participate in the development and maintenance of access roads from the south, initially winter and ultimately all-weather, has also been under review. With appropriate planning, management and outside counsel, both organizations may be viable.

With regard to step 11, under Category D, a related step which should be pursued, particularly in the case of Fort McMurray and Yellowknife opportunities, concerns the possibility of utilizing the regularly scheduled Pacific Western Airlines flights to improve mobility for job situations in these areas while retaining residence in Fort Chipewyan. Such a "commuter concept" might well prove to be economically feasible.

EVALUATION

Currently, the most pressing need, in connection with the process of planning for socio-economic development is the improvement of the evaluative function. This is particularly true in the case of primarily native communities such as Fort Chipewyan, of which there is a large number.

Evaluative factors range from those which are easily quantifiable such as man-months, incomes, levels of social assistance, growth rates, numbers of permanent jobs, employment by economic category and capital investment to more qualitative factors such as aspiration levels, general effectiveness of local organizations and mobility. It is essential that the planning process undertaken in Fort Chipewyan include the utilization of appropriate evaluative factors for each economic and social objective toward which the community deems it should direct itself. Almost more important than the appropriateness of the evaluative factors initially adopted is

the implementation of the evaluative process itself. Those persons involved at the community level, as well as within the senior governments, once familiar with the process would undoubtedly introduce refinements on an ongoing basis. The important thing is that all parties involved in activities affecting the development process within Fort Chipewyan have access to and be guided by common guidelines. To the extent that it is deemed desirable for the people of Fort Chipewyan, utilizing outside counsel as necessary, to set out goals and work toward the achievement of these goals, it would clearly be highly inappropriate for any local organization, government department or other agency to take decisions affecting Fort Chipewyan without suitable reference to local goals. In the past, it appears that the lack of any well-communicated, well-specified goals has resulted in an extremely fragmentary, ill-co-ordinated approach to development.

The reality of a planning and evaluative process such as we have outlined here is that although local people have undoubtedly got the ability to contribute to the process, at least initially they often lack the experience and understanding to actually manage the process. Furthermore, although there are undoubtedly personnel within senior government departments possessing the required ability, the "plan from above" orientation which normally results from this approach is insufficiently constructive and does not provide the constantly improving "grass-roots" development planning capability which must be sought. Also, insofar as a large part of the efforts of a community such as Fort Chipewyan is inevitably directed toward obtaining money, jobs, technical support, incentives and other inputs from government, it is therefore inappropriate and generally unreasonable to anticipate the realistic, and aggressive, "outward-from-

the-community" approach from a government employee. Rather, the most appropriate role for the senior governments in this process is to provide financial assistance, encouragement and involvement.

The counsel which the local community does seem to require, in the case of a community such as Fort Chipewyan, must come from competent, experienced and independent consultants. The complexity of the process which a local community must go through to achieve success in one small area of the community's development is truly bewildering. In order that cohesiveness of action take place from the community out, it appears inescapable that consultants who "know-the-system" must become involved. In the case of Fort Chipewyan, there appears to be a strong argument for making such counsel available to the community, probably through the Local Advisory Committee, on an ongoing basis.

PEACE ATHABASCA LEGAL FRAMEWORK STUDY

Leslie Shaw,
Assistant Professor of Law,
Faculty of Law,
University of Ottawa

September 1971

TERMS OF REFERENCE

"To undertake a study of the statutory and other laws relevant to the interests affected by the low water levels in and about the PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA - specifically the Federal interests and the responsibility for them. The legal basis for Federal action necessary to safeguard Federal interests and discharge Federal responsibility in the area shall be identified; the legal responsibility for the cost of remedial works shall be identified. If necessary, recommendations shall be made respecting a legal basis for Federal action, legislative or otherwise, calculated to minimize the recurrence of such a happening."

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SYNOPSIS

1. (A) Following the submission of the Interim Report of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project, further detailed study should be undertaken to assess the legal implications of the effect of the Bennett Dam. Specifically, should that Interim Report indicate a probable causal relationship between the low water levels of the Delta and the Bennett Dam and/or identify the actual or likely results of such water levels upon the myriad federal, provincial and private interests affected, a definitive attempt must be made:

a) To determine, first, whether or not the ecological regime existing prior to the low water levels ought, either theoretically or practically, to be restored and, secondly, the cubic capacity of water required in the Peace River, as it enters the Delta, to sustain that ecosystem. If restoration to the statu quo ante is either not feasible or desirable, then it should determine the basis upon which, as well as the nature of, an ecological regime deemed requisite for the Delta.

b) To determine, in the light of the answers to (a) supra, whether the effects of the Bennett Dam have been totally adverse, or whether they are in part beneficial to the management of the resources of the Delta.

c) To determine, in the light of the answers to (a) and (b) supra, the actual damage suffered to federal, provincial and private interests in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. Correlative to this must be the determination of whether or not those interests are interests recognized by the law, and therefore, susceptible to the founding of an action for interference with

them.

2. This study has indicated:

a) In the absence of an extra-provincial connection, the construction of the Peace River Power Project was within the legislative authority of the Province of British Columbia and its construction and operation was done pursuant to all the requirements of the relevant provincial statutes.

b) Approval of the Minister of Public Works required under the Navigable Waters Protection Act was not sought. It seems reasonably clear that under section 4 of that Act as well as section 16 of the Interpretation Act that such permission was required. The remedies of the Minister of Public Works are limited under that Act to those provided therein.

c) Federal legislative jurisdiction over various aspects of the Peace-Athabasca Delta is based upon The Fisheries Act, The Migratory Birds Convention Act, The National Parks Act, The Indian Act, and the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

d) Federal proprietary interests in the Delta rest upon its interests in the land and natural resources within, and especially the property in the waters flowing through Wood Buffalo National Park.

e) The interests of Northern Transportation Company Ltd. a Crown corporation, may be affected.

f) The basis of a legal action of the federal government brought in

the Federal Court could be founded in either negligence or nuisance, as well as on the unreasonable use of the waters of the Peace River by the proprietors of the Bennett Dam, upper riparian, to the detriment of the Federal Government, lower riparian.

g) In such an action the federal government would not be bound by the British Columbia statutes and that the courts would, in all probability, decide the matter on the basis of the common law.

h) Any action by the Province of Alberta could be framed similarly to (f) supra.

i) The cost of remedial work would depend upon the outcome--apart from negotiation--of such legal action. However, if such work were a reasonable attempt to mitigate its loss by the federal government: then, if successful in an action, such costs would be recoverable. On what basis and in what amount would depend on the rule applied by the court.

j) The release of water in such quantity and at such times may be requested by the Minister of Fisheries under section 20 (10) of the Fisheries Act. The reason for such a release would have to be specifically required for the purposes stated in that section. Otherwise, the release of water from the Bennett Dam, apart from the voluntary act of British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, could be obtained by way of injunction. It is unlikely that such an order would be made by the court.

k) A probable jurisdictional basis for the federal government in inter-

jurisdictional waters is found in the Canada Waters Act. However, specific legislation dealing with inter-provincial waters should be passed by the federal government; and such legislation, most probably, would be upheld by a Supreme Court applying the rule in Munro v. N.C.C.

1) Failing action under (j) supra, the Navigable Waters Act should be amended so as to more specifically deal with this kind of situation.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL BASES FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE BENNETT DAM
THE NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION ACT

Constitutionally the basis of exclusive provincial regulatory power in regard to water management is its authority in relation to "property and civil rights in the Province" under section 92 (13) of the B.N.A Act, and "matters of a local and private nature in the Province" under section 92 (16); and it has the additional source of legislative authority in section 92 (10) in relation to "local works and undertakings" (other than the classes of works and undertakings in clauses (a), (b) and (c) of section 92 (10)).

Historically it was assumed that the generation of power by hydro-electric developments was exclusively a subject of provincial legislative competence. In 1961, Prof. Laskin wrote:

"...legislative jurisdiction in respect of power projects in a Province resides in that Province, subject to compliance with federal navigation regulations."

To an extent that is true; the generation of hydro-electric power and its use within the province are clearly matters of provincial competence in the absence of any federal connection.² However, it is increasingly the practice of most provincial power systems to form links with the power systems of other provinces and with certain states of the U.S.A. thereby placing the provincial enterprise within federal legislative jurisdiction.³ Such an

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1. Laskin, Jurisdiction Framework for Water Management, in 1 Background Papers, Resources for Tomorrow Conference 211, at 216-218, see also La Forest, The Legal Framework in 1 Water Resources Study of the Atlantic Provinces 10-11 (1968)
 2. Reference Re Waters & Water Powers [1929] Sup. Ct. 200.
 3. B.C. Power Corp. v. Attorney General of British Columbia 44 W.W.R.(n.s.) 65, at 143-158, 170 (1963).

extra-provincial link converts the operation to an extra-provincial work or undertaking under federal control, even if it is a relatively insignificant part of the enterprise.⁴ This would appear to apply not only to the extra-provincial portion of the operation, but to all aspects of the overall enterprise that cannot be entirely separated from the extra-provincial features. This would mean not only that the power systems involved are subject to federal legislative authority but also that they are immune from provincial laws affecting their key characteristics. Thus, the Parliament of Canada by court decisions has substantial jurisdiction over certain hydro-electric production and distribution.

Assuming, but not granting, that power generated from the Peace River Project, i.e., the Gordon M. Shrum generating station does not have an extra-provincial connection and is, therefore, exclusively within provincial legislative jurisdiction, what were the legal steps by which the Bennett Dam and the ancillary works were undertaken?

As seen by the counsel of the British Columbia Hydro and Power authority it was as follows:⁵

- (a) Acting in pursuance of the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority Act 1962 B.C. Stat. 1962, c.8, the Power Measures Act, 1964 B.C. Stat. 1964, c.40, and the Power

4. Re Tank Truck Transport Ltd. 25 D.L.R. 2d 161 (1960), affd 36 D.L.R. 2d 636 (1963)

5. Statement of Defence filed on 1 February 1971 in the Supreme Court of British Columbia in the action between Adam et al v. British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority para. 20.

Measures Act, B.C. Stat. 1966 c.38, the predecessors of the Defendant commenced to develop, construct, build, make, and establish on the Peace River in the Province of British Columbia a storage dam, powerhouse and related auxiliary structures for the hydro-electric generation of power.

- (b) Further acting in pursuance of the above-mentioned statutes, the predecessors of the Defendant applied for and obtained in 1962 in accordance with and under the provisions of the Water Act, B.C. Rev. Stat. 1960 c.405, after public hearing from the Comptroller of Water Rights, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources of the Province of British Columbia, all as set forth in the said water licenses, as amended, and hereinafter particularized, and referable to the said storage dam, power house and related and auxiliary structures.
- (c) Particulars of the said water licenses are as follows:
 - (i) Conditional Water License Water No. 27721 was issued December 21, 1962 to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority to divert and use water of the Peace River and its tributaries all in accordance with the terms of this License.
 - (ii) Conditional Water License No. 27722 (and amendments) was issued December 21, 1962 to British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority to store water of the Peace River and its tributaries all in accordance with the terms of this License as amended by Orders of the Comptroller of Water Rights dated February 27, 1963, July 15, 1968 and November 15, 1968.
- (d) Thereupon the predecessors of the Defendant continued to develop, construct, build, make and establish, and/or continued to cause to be developed, constructed, built, made and established the storage dam, known as the W.A.C. Bennett Dam (hereinafter to be referred to as the Dam) and the powerhouse, known as the Gordon M. Shrum Generating Station and the related and auxiliary structures at and about the location specified in the water licences on the Peace River, which location is approximately 17 miles upstream from Hudson Hope in the Province of British Columbia.
- (e) The Dam was subsequently completed by the Defendant as incorporated by the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority Act, 1964 B.C. Stat 1964 c.7 pursuant to powers and authority conferred thereby and thereunder and in accordance with the Power Measures Act, 1966 B.C. Stat. 1966 c.38, and it has been used to store and regulate the flow of the Peace River at the aforementioned location from about February 1968 all in compliance with the water

licences particularized above and with all the said statutes, statutory powers and authority (hereinafter referred to as the Statutory Authority).

The present Water Act of British Columbia like its predecessors has vested "the property in and the right to the use and flow of all the water at any time in any stream in the Province" in the Crown in right of the Province.⁶ (A similar provision is found in the Water Resources Act⁷ of the Province of Alberta and the National Parks Act⁸ states that the property in or power to dispose of any waters in the public lands of Wood Buffalo National Park is vested in the Government of Canada.)

Prior to the enactment of the first British Columbia Water Act in 1892⁹ there is little doubt¹⁰ that the common law doctrine with regard to riparian rights was applicable,¹¹ as it was part of that body of law inherited by that Province when it achieved colonial status. In essence a riparian owner on a natural stream had, in addition to his ownership of the land, an incorporeal right to the flow of the stream in its natural state. This right to running water was an incident to the property in the land through which it passed. However, the right of the riparian to the flow of water

6. B.C. Rev. Stat. c. section 403, section 3 (1960) as amended
B.C. Stat. 1966 c.54 section 2.

7. Alta. Rev. Stat. c.362, section 5(1) (1955)

8. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 189 (1952)

9. Water Privileges Act, B.C. Stat. 1892 c.47

10. Fort George Lumber Co. v. Grant Trunk Pacific Ry 9 W.W.R. 17 (1915)

11. English Law Ordinance 1867, B.C. Laws 1871, No. 70 (1871).
See English Law Act, B.C. Rev. Stat. c. 129 (1960)

past his land was subject to the lawful and reasonable use of the water by a lower riparian owner. Neither the upper nor lower riparian owner had any property in the flowing water, only the usufruct of its stream for all reasonable purposes.

Although the original understanding of the riparian's interest in the water was stated in terms of his right to the flow of the stream in its natural state, there is some indication of a movement away from this natural flow view to that of one of reasonable use. This latter view permits, within limits, irrigation and manufacturing uses, which were excluded under the strict natural flow doctrine, which in turn tended to permit only domestic personal uses. Lord Cairns explained the principle in Swindon Waterworks Co. v. Wilts and Berks Canal Navigation Co.

Undoubtedly the lower riparian owner is entitled to the accustomed flow of the water for the ordinary purposes for which he can use the water, that is quite consistent with the right of the upper owner also to use the water for all ordinary purposes...But farther, there are uses no doubt to which the water may be put by the upper owner, namely, uses connected with the tenement of that upper owner. Under certain circumstances, and provided no material injury is done, the water may be used and may be diverted for a time by the upper owner for the purpose of irrigation. That may well be done; the exhaustion of the water which may thereby take place may be so inconsiderable as not to form a subject of complaint by the lower owner, and the water may be restored after the object of irrigation is answered, in a volume substantially equal to that in which it passed before. Again, it may well be that there may be a use of the water by the upper owner for, I will say, manufacturing purposes, so reasonable that no just complaint can be made upon the subject by the lower owner. Whether such a use in any particular case could be made for manufacturing purposes connected with the upper tenement would, I apprehend, depend upon whether the use was a reasonable use. Whether it was a reasonable use would depend, at all events in some degree, on the magnitude of the stream from which the deduction was made for this

purpose over and above the ordinary use of the water.

It should be noted that Lord Cairns emphasizes that what is a reasonable use must depend on all the circumstances of the case and also that no material injury is suffered by the lower riparian.

Thus, it would appear that an upper riparian owner is liable to a lower riparian owner for the unreasonable use of waters which by the doctrine must be available to both of them.

Did the enactment in 1892 of the Water Privileges Act¹³ of British Columbia, by which was vested in the Province the property in and the right to the use and flow of all the water at any time in any stream abrogate pre-existing riparian rights? One view may be stated succinctly as follows: all provincial waters are vested in the Crown in the right of the Province except only and insofar as under provincial legislative authority private rights have been established under licences or approvals.¹⁴ In the early legislation exceptions were made with respect to appropriations for stock and domestic use to the extent that they could be satisfied out of unrecorded water having public access. Moreover, a clause was included that expressly saved the rights of a riparian owner

13. Supra note 9.

14. Armstrong, The B.C. Water Act; The End of Riparian Rights [1962] 1 U.B.C. L. Rev. 583. For a short but excellent synopsis see Lucas Water Pollution Control Law in British Columbia [1968] 4 U.B.C. L. Rev. 56, at 80-83.

To use water for domestic purposes.¹⁵ In the 1925 amendment to the Water Act¹⁶ that saving clause was omitted and a provision included which stated:

It shall not, however be an offence for any person to use for domestic purposes any unrecorded water to which there is lawful public or private access.

This amendment has been interpreted to indicate clearly that all water, for all purposes, was vested in the Crown in the right of the province, even though the use of unrecorded water would no longer be an offence. The 1951 amendment¹⁷ is likewise seen as further proof of such vesting of the water in the Crown. That amendment makes it incumbent, in any prosecution under the Act, upon the person divesting water under this provision to prove that such water was unrecorded.

Various sections of these statutes have been the subject of judicial scrutiny;¹⁸ however, for our purposes the decision of Lord Moulton in

15. Water Act, B.C. Stat. 1909 c.48, section 4, 5

16. B.C. Stat, c. 61, section 3 (1925).

17. B.C. Stat. c. section 88, section 5 (1951)

18. Esquimalt Waterworks Co. v. City of Victoria, 12 B.C. 302 (1907) in which Duff J. said, in his examination of the 1892 Act, at 323.

"it cannot, I think, be maintained that it does not, indirectly, interfere in a most substantial way with pre-existing riparian rights; but it is not, I think, necessary to conclude that the Act...abrogates those rights."

Johnson v. Anderson 1937 1 W.W.R. 245, in which Fisher J. considered the effect of the 1925 amendment and refused to hold that the plaintiff's riparian rights had been taken away under the legislation. Salvas v. Bell [1927] 4 D.L.R. 1099.

Cook v. Vancouver¹⁹ is important in that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council held that the right of a riparian to the continuance of an undiminished flow of water had been taken away by the Provincial Water Act. In Johnson v. Anderson,²⁰ Fisher J. held that the decision in the Cook case meant no more than that the legislation up to that time had taken away the riparian owner's right to the continued flow of water by his land undiminished as against the recorded rights of other parties.

Although the matter is in no way certain, it would appear from a reading of the case law and the comprehension of the statutory material that in British Columbia the right of a riparian owner to an undiminished flow of water past his property, if it has not been completely abrogated, has certainly been abridged by the provincial legislation. It is certain that such abridgment occurs to the riparian owner's right to use water to the extent that his right interferes with the rights of licenced appropriators.

The regulation of the Peace River by a large storage dam near Hudson Hope, B.C., was first considered in the late fifties by the Swedish industrialist Axel Wenner-Gwen, who then had a contract with the B.C. government to carry out resource surveys and development in the Upper Peace River Basin.²¹

The project was initiated by the Peace River Power Development Company,

19. 6 W.W.R. 1492, at 1494 (1914)

20. 1 W.W.R. 245 (1937)

21. Alberta Dept. of Agriculture Annual Report 93 (1958), Annual Report 96-7 (1959)

Limited, which along with other companies, was expropriated by the Province of British Columbia in 1961. It then became part of the Provincial Crown Corporation, the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority.

There is some indication that the probable downstream effects of the Peace River Power Project were known²² to affect the Delta area. Further, it would appear that discussions were carried out between the original private developer and the Government of Alberta with regard to the water supply for the Town of Peace River, Alta.²³ This agreement was apparently made on July 9, 1959. However, the Minister of Lands and Forests of B.C., Mr. Williston, in a letter to the Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Strom, said in regard to that earlier agreement:

"With respect to your remarks concerning promises by the Peace River Power Development Company, it is first recorded that this government was not associated with these presentations and does not feel bound by pronouncements of its officials."²⁴

Attention is drawn to this agreement and the alleged studies to indicate that there is sufficient material to evidence that both the Federal and Alberta Governments, prior to the actual construction of the project, knew or ought to have known that their interests would be affected.

22. Implications, Findings, and Recommendations, in The Peace-Athabasca Delta Symposium, 1971, P. 14, Edmonton Journal, September 9, 1970, 14.

23. Craig, Background: Athabasca Catastrophe, Edmonton Journal, September 9, 1970.

24. Id.

Under the British Columbia Water Act, any water impoundment creating an unreasonable use requires a licence.²⁵ Where flooding of Crown land is proposed, a further permit must be obtained from the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources.²⁶ The actual formal application for a licence to divert or impound water must be made to the Comptroller of Water Rights and be supported by plans and specifications.

The Statute provided that:

Any licensee, riparian owner or applicant for a licence who believes that his rights would be prejudiced by the grant of the licence may file an objection.²⁷

The comptroller is then empowered to decide in his discretion whether or not the objection warrants a hearing. It is safe to assume that persons resident in Alberta who are likely to be affected by the subject matter of the hearing would not be aware of the procedure, since requirements as to notice would normally be assumed to include service and publication only in British Columbia.²⁸ Nevertheless, it would appear that the Province of Alberta had in 1959 been invited to attend when B.C. applied for a licence,

25. B.C. Rev. Stat. c. 405, section 3, 6, 8, (1960).

26. Id. section 23.

27. Id. section 9.

28. Water Act Regulations O/C 1960-2771 as amended by O/C 277/62; 2649/63, section 2.02-2 O.S.

but did not attend when the hearing was held.²⁹

Such a hearing was held in 1962 and licences were granted by the B.C. Comptroller of Water Rights to divert, use and store water of the Peace River for the purposes of the Peace River Power Project. Subsequent to the granting of the requisite licences, the development was undertaken and completed. Thus it is that the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority is able to plead that the total project was undertaken pursuant to statutory authority. There can be little doubt that, insofar as the law of British Columbia was concerned, they acted legally.

There is under the Alberta Water Resources Act³⁰ a provision similar to those found in the British Columbia legislation as to the requirement of a licence before any diversion of and construction upon any water the property of which is vested in the Crown in the right of Alberta. However, a careful comprehension of that Act indicates it is limited, as indeed it has to be under constitutional jurisprudence, to intra Alberta water and its licencing provisions could not be made to apply to extra provincial subjects.

If the Peace River Power Project is located on a navigable river, then the developers were required under the Navigable Waters Protection Act³¹ to make

29. Craig, Background: Athabasca Catastrophe, Edmonton Journal September 9, 1970.

30. Alta. Rev. Stat. c. 362, section 6 (1955).

31. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 193 (1952) section 4 (as amended S.C. 1956 c. 41 section 1, 4)

an application for approval of the 'work' from the Federal Minister of Public Works. It appears that neither the British Columbia Hydro and Power Co. nor its predecessors in the project, did in fact obtain such approval. It would appear that their action was based on one or other (perhaps both) of the following assumptions. One, that the Peace River at the site of the Dam project and at the rapids was not a navigable river.³² Secondly, that by an interreading of the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Interpretation Act³³ a provincial Crown corporation was excluded and hence did not require Federal approval. As to the second proposition I am unable to find any authority to support it.

The main purpose and effect of the Navigable Waters Protection Act is to prevent obstruction of navigation and to maintain navigability. It is the statutory instrument by means of which the exclusive federal legislative jurisdiction over navigation³⁴ is exercised. This legislative power extends to inland and intra-provincial waters as well as to inter-provincial and international waters. This legislative jurisdiction has enjoyed a liberal interpretation and has been broadly construed by the courts.³⁵ Prof. Laskin has written of the navigation power:

It embraces, of course, protection of public rights of navigation recognized by the common law, and also extinction

32. Edmonton Journal, January 8, 1971.

33. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 158.

34. B.N.A. Act section 92 (10).

35. Montreal v. Montreal Harbour Commissioners 1926 A.C. 299.

or modification of such rights. The authority of Parliament in relation to navigation is not affected by the fact that there is a private title to the bed of navigable waters, or even by the fact that the title is in the Crown in right of the Province. As part of its legislative authority here, Parliament may authorize works for improvement of navigation, may prohibit under penalty, or require a licence or permission to erect dams, bridges or other structures and may regulate their operation in their effect upon navigation.³⁶

Whether or not a particular body of water is navigable is a question of fact to be determined in each particular instance. The evidence regarding the Peace River and especially the historical use made of it for purposes of transportation would indicate that it is a navigable river in the area of the dam site, though perhaps not at the rapids. Mr. Justice Girouard, in A-G. Quebec v. Fraser said:

"It is not necessary that navigation should be continuous... A river may not be capable of navigation in parts, like the St. Lawrence at the Lachine Rapids, at the Cascades, Coteau and Long Sault rapids, the Ottawa at Carillon, and the Chaudiere and the Chats rapids, and yet be a navigable river, if, in fact, it is navigated for purposes of trade and commerce."³⁷

It could thus be argued that the Peace is a Navigable River and that the Bennett Dam has significantly affected navigation downstream where the Peace River is clearly navigable. I should think that a court would hold such to be the case.

36. Laskin, op. cit. Jurisdictional Framework *supra* note 1, 216.

37. 1906 Sup. Ct. 477, at 597.

As the Bennett Dam was clearly a 'work',³⁸ for which federal approval was required,³⁹ what is the position when such approval was neither sought nor granted? The Navigable Waters Protection Act is explicit:

"Where any work to which this part applies is built or placed without having been approved by the Minister or is built or placed upon a site not approved by the Minister or is not built or placed in accordance with plans so approved, is not maintained in accordance with such plans and the regulations, the Minister, may

- (a) order the owner of the work to remove or alter the work;
- (b) where the owner fails forthwith to comply with an order pursuant to paragraph (a), remove and destroy the work and sell, give away or otherwise dispose of the materials contained in the work.

It must be assumed that the Federal Department of Public Works was aware of the situation at some stage either before or during the construction of the Bennett Dam. It is reported that there were federal government representatives at the public hearing held by the B.C. Comptroller of Water Rights at Chetwynd, B.C., in 1962.⁴¹ If knowledge may be imputed to the Federal Government, it is all the more surprising that the Minister of Public Works did not, as provided under the Act, order the developer to refrain from proceeding with the construction of the work.⁴²

38. Supra note 31, section 2(b).

39. Id. section 4(1) (a).

41. Victoria Colonist, January 7, 1971. Mr. Williston is reported to have said of those federal representatives: "They never entered any protest at any time that it was a violation of any statute or federal requirement."

42. Supra note 31, section 5(1) (c).

The sanctions in the Act are explicit for failing to remove or alter the work as ordered by the Minister; B.C. Hydro and Electric Power Co. is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars.⁴³ The minister could under section 5 (1) (b) (supra) move to remove and destroy the Bennett Dam. Such a notion is nonsensical; the Dam is six hundred feet high, with a length of one and one quarter miles being one half of a mile thick at its base and represents a volume of 57.2 million cubic yards of gravel, sand and rock. Further, it is interesting to note that total expenditures on the Peace River Power Project as of the March 31, 1969, were \$530,816,274.⁴⁴

Obviously, the sections which appear relevant in the Navigable Waters Protection Act appear not to have envisaged such a situation.

In the absence of access to such documents on file with the federal executive as regards this matter, it is not possible to give a definite answer as to what, if any, course of action should be followed pursuant to B.C. Hydro and Power Authority's failure to apply for approval by the Minister of Public Works for the construction of the Peace River Power Project upon an apparently navigable river. Likewise, in the absence of such documents, it is impossible to decide whether or not there was acquiescence on the part of the federal authorities.

43. Id. section (1) as amended S.C. 1956 c. 41, section 5.

44. B.C. Hydro & Power Co., 7th Annual Report, March 31, 1969.

THE FISHERIES ACT

Under section 92 (12) of the B.N.A. Act the Federal Government is granted exclusive legislative jurisdiction over "Sea Coast and Inland Fisheries". The instrument by which such legislative jurisdiction is exercised is the Fisheries Act.¹ Once again must be emphasized the distinction which exists between legislative jurisdiction and proprietary rights, for the provincial governments exercise extensive proprietary rights as a result of their ownership of river and lake beds. Under the Public Lands Act² of Alberta all fisheries except those expressly conveyed away and/or those owned by the Crown in right of Canada are owned by the Crown in right of the Province of Alberta.

The judicial decisions as to the scope of this federal power are reasonably clear. In a leading case³ the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council affirmed the interpretation placed by the Supreme Court of Canada on section 92 (10). This interpretation was later summarized by the Privy Council as follows:

By S. 91 of the British North America Act, 1867, the exclusive legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada extends to all matters, coming within (amongst other things) 'sea coast and inland Fisheries'. The meaning of this Provision was considered at this Board...and it was held that it does not confer on the Dominion any rights of property, but that it does confer an exclusive right on the Dominion to make restrictions or limitations by which public rights of fishing are controlled, and on this exclusive right provincial legislation cannot

1. Can. Rev. Stat. 1952 c. 189.

2. Id. section 2(d).

3. B.N.A. Act, section 1(a).

trench. It recognized that the Province retains a right to dispose of any fisheries to the property in which the province has a legal title, so far as the mode of such disposal is consistent with the Dominion right of regulation, but it held that, even in the case where proprietary rights remain in the Province, the subject matter may be of such a character that the exclusive power of the Dominion to legislate in regard to fisheries may restrict the free exercise of provincial rights. Accordingly, the Privy Council sustained the right of the Dominion to control the methods and season of fishing and to impose a tax in the nature of the licence duty as a condition of the right to fish, even in cases in which the property in the fishery original originally was or still is in the Provincial Government.⁴

Thus the Federal Government may regulate the activities of fishermen as well as the resource by way of the determination of fishing seasons, methods of fishing, conservation regulations and pollution measures.

However, in the exercise of its fisheries power the Federal Government could not legislate so as to deal with the private rights of persons, as that would be deemed to be legislation under section 92 (13) of the B.N.A. Act. It is, therefore, doubtful whether the Federal Government could grant a right of action to fishermen against those who interfere with the flow of a river, for in issue it would not be the regulation of fisheries, but rather the regulation of the rights of fishermen. Correlative to this would be the Federal Government's inability to bring a group action on behalf of fishermen. They would be limited to the extent to which such actions are permitted under either the common law or provincial legislation.

4. Supra note (1) section 4.

B. F. Bidgood⁵ indicates that a commercial gill net fishery for lake trout and lake whitefish has existed in the Saskatchewan oligotrophic waters of Lake Athabasca since 1926 and a fishery for walleye and northern pike began in 1943 in the dystrophic waters of Alberta. In 1963 following the earlier discovery of walleye in Lake Richardson, a commercial fishery was proscribed for that lake.

Apparently there are present, in the area of the Peace-Athabasca Delta, fisheries which are the legitimate regulatory interest of the Federal Government. It must again be stressed that any action by the Federal Government under the Fisheries Act must in essence relate to the fisheries as such.

It is not known and it is difficult to determine from the drawings of the Bennett Dam to what extent the Federal interest in Fisheries has been protected. Neither is it known to what extent the Department of Fisheries was involved, formally or informally, with B.C. Hydro and Power Authority during the building of the Bennett Dam. The Act is quite clear as to the duties of the owner or occupier of a dam and makes provision, whereby the Minister of Fisheries determines it to be in the public interest for a fish pass to exist to inter alia:

- (1) require the owner or occupier of the dam to provide a durable and efficient fish way, or canal around the dam;

5. Id. section 7 (1).

- (2) require that the place, form and capacity of the fishway or canal to be constructed, to be approved by the minister before its construction takes place;
- (3) require where such a fishway or canal has been provided that it be kept open and be supplied with sufficient water;
- (4) require that the minister, may himself, in order to procure the construction of such a fishway or canal, complete it himself.⁶

The Act further permits:

At every...dam..., where the minister determines it to be necessary the owner or occupier thereof shall when required by the minister, provide a sufficient flow of water over the spillway or crest, with connecting sluices into the river below to permit the safe and unimpeded descent of fish.⁷

The owned or occupier of any...dam...shall permit to escape into the river bed below the said...dam..., such quantity of water at all times, as will, in the opinion of the minister, be sufficient for the safety of fish and for the flooding of the spawning grounds to such depth as will, in the opinion of the minister, be necessary for the safety of the ova deposited thereon.⁸

It would appear that in the case of the owner or occupier of a dam who refuses or neglects to carry out a ministerial order under section 20 (1), (7), (8) there is a liability, by way of summary proceedings, to a penalty of not less than four dollars and not more than twenty dollars per day during which the ministerial order is not complied with.⁹

6. Id. section 7 (1) (a).

7. Id. section 7 (1) (a.1).

8. Id. section 7 (1) (b).

9. S. 52.

As has been earlier indicated it is not known to what extent the Department of Fisheries was involved in the Peace River Power Project, or whether the regulation of the Peace River by the Bennett Dam has in fact affected either the safety of the fish or the spawning grounds downstream in the Peace-Athabasca Delta area. Assuming there is such damage to the fisheries of the Delta, then the only real, but it may be illusory, power of the minister under section 20 (10) is to require such quantity of water at all times as will, in his opinion, be sufficient for the safety of fish and for the flooding of the spawning grounds to such depth as will, in the minister's opinion, be necessary for the safety of the ova deposited thereon.

The Act appears to be strangely deficient as to what happens when the owner or occupier of the dam refuses or neglects to obey such a ministerial request. The only penalty provision applicable is that found in section 66 which provides:

Except as herein otherwise provided, every one who violates or prepares to violate any provision of this Act, or any regulation, is liable to a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars and costs, and, in default of payment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months, or to both.

Finally it may be possible for the Attorney-General of Canada, apart from his ability to bring an indictment for a public nuisance against those who have harmed the fisheries by an unreasonable impoundment of water, to bring an action for damages suffered by him, by taking the remedial action necessary to preserve the fisheries.

THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

Wood Buffalo National Park, largely located in the area of the Peace-Athabasca Delta, is the largest national park in the world. The National Parks Act¹ is the federal statutory authority which seeks to regulate the nature and use of such national parks.

Wood Buffalo National Park is public land and is owned by the Crown in right of Canada. Public land in the Act means "land belonging to Her Majesty in right of Canada...including any waters on upon, or flowing through such lands and the natural resources of the said land".

Therefore, according to this definition, the waters of the Peace River from the point they enter the Park on the 5th Meridian and until they join with the Riviere des Rochers are the subject or property and belong to the Crown in right of Canada. There can be little doubt that the federal legislative jurisdiction over the "Public Debt and Property",³ coupled with the federal ownership of the lands comprising the park, does permit such creation and vesting of property rights in the water, in the Crown.

In addition to the Peace River, the waters in Lake Claire, Baril Lake and Mamawi Lake, along with the water of the Quatre Fourches, are in a similar category. Furthermore, the Federal Government is a riparian owner along the west bank of the Slave River.

1. Can. Rev. Stat. 1952 c.189.

2. Id. section 2 (d).

3. B.N.A. Act, section 1 (a).

Wood Buffalo National Park was created in 1922 with the primary purpose of preserving the last known herd of wood bison. That original herd, along with the prairie bison introduced later, has now grown to between 10,000 - 12,000 animals. They are also the property of the Crown in right of Canada. Notwithstanding the purpose for creating it, the park contains unusual topography, flora and fauna.

The policy of the federal government towards the National Parks is best seen in the description contained in the Act:

"The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and the National Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."⁴

To accomplish that purpose the Governor in Council may, as he deems it expedient, pass regulations to cover virtually every facet of the use and enjoyment of the park.⁵ He may pass regulations for "the preservation, control, and management of the parks"⁶ "the protection of the fauna"⁷ "the protection of wild animals"⁸ and "the abatement and prevention of nuisances".⁹

4. Supra note (1) section 4.

5. Id. section 7 (1).

6. Id. section 7 (1) (a).

7. Id. section 7 (1) (a.1).

8. Id. section 7 (1) (b).

9. Id. section 7 (1) (e).

The extent to which the lowering of the levels of the Peace River has impaired the enjoyment of Wood Buffalo National Park or has resulted in a diminishing of the federal government's proprietary interests, is not yet known. However, the federal government could legislate, either to prohibit or regulate, activities outside of Wood Buffalo National Park that are injurious to land within the park.

Such legislation would need to clearly indicate that it is intended to protect federal public property rather than that it is an attempt to regulate some matter which otherwise would fall under provincial legislative jurisdiction.

INDIANS AND LANDS RESERVED FOR THE INDIANS

By Section 91 (24) of the B.N.A. Act, exclusive legislative authority over "Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians" is assigned to the Parliament of Canada. It must be observed that the legal situation with regard to the Indian and lands reserved for the Indians is exceptionally complex, and there is a glaring scarcity of judicial decisions relevant to that head of power.

It is apparent that the grant of legislative authority over "lands reserved for the Indians" to the federal government did not carry with it any beneficial interest in those lands.¹ The Indian title was described as "a personal and usufructuary right, dependent upon the goodwill of the sovereign" and formed a burden on the underlying title of the Crown. After Confederation that underlying title became that of the Crown in right of the Province.² This personal and usufructuary right could only be surrendered to the federal government (Crown in right of Canada); however, this surrender operated to unburden the underlying title of the Crown in right of the province and thereby perfected the latter's title.

Since proprietary rights to "lands reserved for the Indians" does not vest in the federal government, what then is the scope of its legislative authority over such lands?

1. St. Catherine's Milling and Lumber Co. v. The Queen, 14 A.C. 46 (1889).

2. B.N.A. Act section 109.

Maclean J. in The King v. Lady McMaster³ stated that the term comprehended "the control, direction and management of lands reserved for Indians."

As, therefore, the interest of the "Indian" with regard to "lands reserved for the Indian" is only a personal usufruct with title in the right of the Crown of the Province in which the land is situated then the federal government does not acquire any property in any waters on such lands reserved.⁴

If that is the general situation, what then is the position of the "Lands reserved for the Indians" in the Peace-Athabasca Delta? Alberta was created out of lands reserved under the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company. Judicial decisions⁵ have held that the property of the Hudson's Bay Company was subject to Indians' rights similar to those provided under the proclamation.

The legal position of those lands is now subject to the provisions of the natural resources agreements effected between the federal government and

3. 1926 Ex., at 75.

4. R. v. Commanda, 1939 Ont. W.N. 466, Ontario Mining Co. v. Seybold, 1903 A.C. 73, at 82.

5. R. v. Wesley, 1932 4 D.L.R. 774, R. v. Kogogolak, (1959) R. v. Sikyea, 40 W.W.R. 494 (1962), R. v. Koonungnak, 45 W.W.R. 282 (1963).

and the prairie provinces in 1930 and validated by the B.N.A. Act of 1930⁶. Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the agreement with Alberta indicate that lands already included in Indian reserves shall continue to be vested in the Crown and be administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of Canada. Moreover, lands set apart for Indian reserves after the signing of the agreement were to be administered by Canada in the same way in all respects as if they had never passed to the Province of Alberta. It is arguable that these latter lands would not vest in the Crown in right of Canada.⁷

Further research is required to determine the date upon which and under what circumstances the Chipewyan Reserves in the Delta area were set aside for the use of the Indians of that land.

The determination of the right of the Indians to hunt, fish and trap is also subject to the enactments of 1930. Section 1 of the B.N.A. Act 1930 states:

1. The agreements set out in the schedule to this Act are hereby confirmed and shall have the force of law notwithstanding anything in the British North American Act, 1867, or any Act amending the same, or any Act of the Parliament of Canada, or in any order in Council or terms or conditions of union made or approved under any such Act as aforesaid.⁸

Overriding effect is thereby given to clause 12 in the agreement with the

6. VI Can. Rev. Stat. 219 (1952).

7. Id., at 237-8.

8. Id., at 220.

Province of Alberta, which provides:

In order to secure to the Indian of the Province the continuance of the supply of game and fish for their support and subsistence, Canada agrees that the laws respecting game in force in the province from time to time shall apply to the Indians within the boundaries thereof, provided, however, that the said Indians shall have the right, which the Province hereby assures to them, of hunting, trapping and fishing game and fish for food at all seasons of the year on all unoccupied Crown lands and on any other lands to which the said Indians may have a right of access.⁹

The apparent result of a line of judicial interpretations of that section would indicate that the present position of Alberta Indians is that they are exempt from all provincial game legislation providing they are hunting for food.¹⁰

The Supreme Court of Canada in Daniels v. The Queen,¹¹ a case involving the Manitoba equivalent to section 12 in the Alberta agreement, held that the immunity therein contained only applied to provincial laws and did not include federal enactments.

The Chipewyan Indians of Athabasca River, Birch River, Peace River, Slave River, and Gull River, also the Cree Indians of Gull River and Deep Lake

9. Supra note 7.

10. R. v. Wesley, 1932 2 W.W.R. 337, R. v. Smith, 1935 2 W.W.R. 433, R. v. Strongquill, 1953 8 W.W.R. 247, R. v. Little Bear, 26 W.W.R. 35 (1958), aff'd 25 W.W.R. 580 (1958), Regina v. Prince, (1964).

11. 1968 Sup. Ct. 917.

signed Treaty No. 8 at Fort Chipewyan on July 13, 1899. The descendants of those Indians inhabit the Delta area and are subject to the terms of that treaty. As of December 31, 1970, the treaty register indicated that there were seven hundred and forty-one Cree Indians and two hundred and forty-six Chipewyan Indians in the area.

A clause in that treaty promised, "the said Indians...shall have the right to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping and fishing throughout the tract surrendered." However, this right was qualified in the sense that they were stated to be "subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the government acting under the authority of His Majesty."

There is some evidence to indicate that these rights of hunting, trapping and fishing are still of fairly substantial importance to the Indians of the Delta area. It may be argued that, by a literal interpretation of the clause in Treaty No. 8, any federal enactment would fall within the ambit of the qualification clause so that no federal legislative encroachment, abridgement, or abrogation of these rights could be regarded as a breach of Treaty No. 8. However, the courts in looking at similar provisions in Treaty No. 7 in Rex v. Wesley¹² and in Treaty No. 11 in Regina v. Sikyea¹³ refused such a literal interpretation.

From these treaties and from the negotiations preceding the

12. 1932 4 D.L.R. 774.

13. 46 W.W.R. 65 (1964).

the signing of these treaties as reported in Mr. Morris' book, it is I think, obvious that while the government hoped that the Indians would ultimately take up the white man's way of life, until they did, they were expected to continue their previous mode of life with only such regulations and restrictions as would assure that a supply of game for their own needs would be maintained. The regulations that 'the Government of the Country' were entitled to make under the clause of the treaty which I have quoted, were I think, limited to this kind of regulation. Certainly the commissioners who represented the government at the signing of the treaties so understood it. For example, in the report of the commissioners who negotiated Treaty No. 8, this appears:

Our chief difficulty was the apprehension that the hunting and fishing privileges were to be curtailed. The provision in the treaty under which ammunition and twine is to be furnished went far in the direction of quieting the fears of the Indians, for they admitted that it would be unreasonable to furnish the means of hunting and fishing if laws were to be enacted which would make hunting and fishing so restricted as to render it impossible to make a livelihood by such pursuits. But over and above the provision, we have to solemnly assure them that only such laws as to hunting and fishing as were in the interest of the Indians and were found necessary in order to protect the fish and fur-bearing animals would be made, and that they would be as free to hunt and fish after the treaty as they would be if they never entered into it.

These Indians, as well as all others, would have been surprised indeed if, in the face of such assurances, the clause in their treaty which purported to continue their rights to hunt and fish could be used to restrict their right to shoot game birds to one and one-half months each year. I agree with the view of McGillivray, M.A., in the Wesley case, supra, where he says at 352:

It is true that Government regulations in respect of hunting are contemplated in the treaty but considering that treaty in its proper setting I do not think that any of the makers of it could by any stretch of the imagination be deemed to have contemplated a day when the Indians would be deprived of an unfettered right to hunt game of all kinds for food on unoccupied

Crown land."¹⁴

I am inclined to think that this interpretation of the clause found in Treaty No. 8 is desirable over the literal view. Clearly the present situation within the Peace-Athabasca Delta is not the result of any overt federal legislative encroachment on the terms of that treaty. The question remains, however, and the legal answer is uncertain. Has the federal government by its apparent failure to act under its own legislation, i.e., The Navigable Waters Protection Act, created a situation hydrologically whereby these rights will be, in fact, extinguished? Under the treaty the Indians are said to have a right, but, if that right is incapable of being exercised, would the federal government be held liable at the suit of the Indians involved?

As to how critical the actual situation is with regard to hunting, fishing and trapping, time alone will tell. Indications are that they have been affected, but to what degree must await more definitive field studies.

Opinion as to whether or not the interest of the Indian in the lands reserved for him is sufficient for him to maintain an action against the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority is unclear. Further research based on the actual situation under treaty 8 is required.

14. Id., at 68.

THE MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT

It is generally conceded that the Peace-Athabasca Delta is one of the major staging areas for migratory birds. To what extent they either have been or will be affected by the changes in flora brought about by the present hydrological regime is not known.

Since a large part of their staging grounds are located in the Wood Buffalo National Park, the federal government, in addition to its legislative jurisdiction, has certain proprietary rights. Ownership of land implied propriety rights over all wildlife inhabiting that land, as at common law the occupier was regarded as the qualified owner of all birds and animals on his property for the time being.

Under section 132 of the B.N.A. Act, parliament was granted all powers necessary or proper for performing the obligations of Canada or of any Province arising under treaties made between the British Empire and a foreign country. Acting pursuant to that section, the Parliament of Canada may today legislate with regard to matters which otherwise may be under provincial legislative jurisdiction.¹

On the 16th of August, 1916, Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) entered into a convention with the United States of America, which convention was later ratified by both parties. The Canadian government then passed the Migratory Birds Convention Act² so as to sanction, ratify and confirm

1. Regina v. Sikea, 1964 2 C.C.C. 325.

2. Can Rev. Stat. 1952 c. 179.

that convention. It is instructive to note the words of the preamble to that Convention, for therein is clearly and concisely stated its purpose:

Whereas many species of birds in the course of their annual migrations traverse certain parts of the Dominion of Canada and the United States; and

Whereas many of these species are of great value as a source of food or in destroying insects which are injurious to forests and forage plants on the public domain, as well as to agricultural crops, in both Canada and the United States, but are nevertheless in danger of extermination through lack of adequate protection during the nesting season on their way to and from their breeding grounds.

His Majesty...and the United States of America, being desirous of saving from indiscriminate slaughter and of ensuring the preservation of such migratory birds as are either useful to man or are harmless, have resolved to adopt some uniform system of protection which shall effectively accomplish such objects...

Thus, both from the preamble of the Convention as well as from its terms its purpose is clear. It is to save the migratory birds from indiscriminate slaughter resulting from indiscriminate hunting.

The provisions of the Migratory Birds Convention Act is clearly directed to the same purpose and creates a regime for their protection, again clearly from hunters.

Ex facie there would appear to be nothing in the act which would permit the federal government to act in a situation such as that presently occurring in the Peace-Athabasca Delta.

The Act states:

4 (1) "The Governor in Council may make such regulations as are deemed expedient to protect the migratory game, migratory insectivorous and migratory non-game birds that inhabit Canada during the whole or any part of the year.

(2) Subject to the provisions of the Convention, the regulations may provide:

(1) for any purpose that may be deemed expedient for carrying out the intentions of this Act and the said Convention, whether such other regulations are of the kind enumerated in this section or not."

As the Convention did not envisage the present situation, the making of regulations, even under section 4 (2) (c), would be subject to the Convention and hence the federal government at the moment would lack statutory authority to act so as to protect the migratory birds affected by the water levels in the Peace-Athabasca Delta.

It is of passing interest to note that under the Migratory Birds Regulations³ there is a prohibition against the pollution by oil, oil wastes or substances harmful to migratory fowl of waters frequented by migratory birds or waters flowing into such waters.⁴

3. P.C. 1966-1475 S.O.R./63-361.

4. Id. section 51.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY LTD.

Northern Transportation Company, Ltd.,¹ a Federal Crown Corporation, operates as a subsidiary of Eldorado Mining and Refining Ltd. By the operation of the Government Companies Operations Act² that company may undertake legal action, if such were necessary, to protect its interests. Section 3 enacts:

"Actions, suits or other legal proceedings in respect of any right or obligation acquired or incurred by a Company on behalf of Her Majesty, whether in its name or in the name of Her Majesty, may be brought or taken by or against the Company in the name of the Company in any court that would have jurisdiction if the Company were not an agent of Her Majesty."

Normally, it appears to have been the practice for suits initiated by the company to be heard in the former Exchequer Court even though the jurisdiction of that Court in such matters was of a concurrent nature.³

If an action were commenced in British Columbia, the vital question of the Company's immunity from that province's legislation would arise. That substantive question is very complex, but it would appear that, as Gibson has indicated, perhaps Northern Transportation Company, Ltd., may be exempt from the Provincial Statutes.

1. Financial Administration Act, Can. Rev. Stat. c. 116, section 66, Schedule D (1952).

2. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 133, Mr. Powell, secretary of the company indicated that this Act was by an order-in-Council made applicable to Northern Transportation Company Ltd.

3. See, section 17 (4), Federal Court Act, Can. Stat. c. 1, section 22 (1) (1970).

Further, it is interesting to observe that, under section 38 (2) of the Federal Court Act,⁵ the Company, suing either in its own name or in that of Her Majesty, may be subject to the period of limitation specified in section 52 (b) of the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority Act.⁶ That Act prescribed that every action shall be commenced not later than twelve months after the cause of action arose.

5. Supra note 3.

6. B.C. Stat. c. 38 (1966)

APPARENT CONSEQUENCES OF THE BENNETT DAM

Until the completion of the field studies being made by the members of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project staff, it is difficult to state with certainty what are, in fact, the known and apparent consequences of the building of the Bennett Dam and whether, in fact, the construction of the Dam is responsible for such damages. The British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority claim that:

(1) The historical levels and quantities of the seasonal flows of the Peace River from the Province of British Columbia to the Province of Alberta are variable and cyclical.

(2) While the Dam has been used by the Defendant [B.C. Hydro and Power Co.] to regulate the flow of the Peace River from the Province of British Columbia to the Province of Alberta, the regulation as such did not cause or contribute to the alleged damage. The proximate and direct cause of the alleged diminution in the flow of the Peace River both in British Columbia and Alberta was the exceptional low level of precipitation in whatever form and run off in the years alleged in the statement of claim [i.e. 1968-69-70] and other years entering the catchment of the Peace River in both British Columbia and Alberta.

(3) Accordingly, the alleged diminution constitutes an Act of God.¹

On the other hand, there is evidence that as the levels of Lake Athabasca and of the other Delta Lakes, especially Claire, Baril and Mamawi, are to some degree controlled by the flows of the Peace River, the regulation of the Peace River at the Bennett Dam has resulted in lowered lake levels and in a reduced range of annual fluctuations. There is also the likelihood that the Bennett Dam is likely to initiate slow regime changes in the outflow

1. Statement of Defence: Arsen Adam et al v. B.C. Hydro and Power Authority, filed February 1, 1971 para. 24.

channels of Lake Athabasca. Although it appears impossible to predict the eventual outcome of these changes or even the rate at which they will occur, it is probable that there will be a further lowering of water levels.²

From conversations held with the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project staff as well as with representatives of the Delta area, I am inclined to believe that on the balance of probabilities, it can be shown that the Bennett Dam is the single most important factor in the changed hydrological regime of the Delta; and I adhere to the view that the survey work being carried out, when correlated with historical and personal records, will show that to be the case. Unfortunately, it would appear that detailed records of the levels, flow and general hydrological regime of the Delta area prior to the construction of the dam are incomplete.

It would appear, but to what extent is not known, that the changed water pattern has affected the fauna and flora of the Delta area. Whether such changes are detrimental or beneficial can only be answered in the light of priorities determined by those involved in such decisions. Locally it is believed that among the changes were the impairment and destruction of both the habitat and food supply of the muskrat as well as the killing of many of the muskrat themselves. Similarly, members of the Athabasca Fish Co-operative believe the Dam to be responsible for the diminution and loss of their

2. See Proceedings of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Symposium especially the papers by Bennett, Kellerhals and Bailey.

commercial fishery resource in Lake Athabasca. The presence of a dredger in Lake Athabasca, as well as the considered comments of the residents, would indicate that barge transportation is and will be affected by the low water levels. The technical staff at the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project at Fort Chipewyan, though guarded in their comments, indicated that as a result of the floristic changes, certain migratory birds and the bison could be affected. However, apparently what is detrimental floristically to the bison is beneficial to the moose.

It was difficult to ascertain from talking to the local native leaders to what extent the diminution of the muskrat and commercial fishery was responsible for the economic situation of the inhabitants or whether, in fact, the alleged diminution was more apparent than real. It is possible that because fewer individuals were engaged in trapping and fishing, the catches were proportionately smaller. Although the Athabasca Fish Co-operative Ltd. has fifty-three members, both Treaty Indian and Metis, in 1970, twenty-six of them fished, [twenty-five of them actively] whereas in 1971 only seventeen fished [thirteen of them actively].³

Further consideration of this matter must await more definitive studies coupled with a more exhaustive analysis of the views of the local people. My own thinking, and it is perhaps more of a feeling, is that the evidence will indicate detrimental effects which will severely affect the local people and that there is a casual relationship between them and the Bennett Dam.

3. As stated by the President, Mr. Frank Ladouceur when asked how many members were active, he replied, five!

POSSIBLE BASIS FOR PRIVATE OR GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

Canadian constitutional documents are silent about the nature of the rights of provinces and the Federal Government with regard to inter-provincial waters. Nevertheless, it is clear that a Province can only legislate with regard to matters within its territorial jurisdiction; and, if such intra-provincial legislation and action prejudices the rights of a neighboring province, it must be capable of being held accountable. To suggest otherwise would be to negate the very principle of federalism and put an end to the legal maxim that every harm has a remedy.

Therefore, if the Peace-Athabasca Delta problem came before the courts, those courts would be obliged to find a solution. In the absence of any agreement between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia regarding the equitable use of the waters of the Peace River, on what basis would such a court proceed? That a dispute exists is clear; but in which Province would the dispute be heard, and upon what principle of law would the matter be determined?

There no longer can be any question that one province can sue another or even the Crown in right of Canada. As Professor Laskin has said:

...there is no obstacle to resolution of competing proprietary water rights by reason of the anachronistic concept of indivisibility of the Crown. The Crown in right of one Province is different from the Crown in the right of another or from the Crown in the right of Canada.¹

1. Jurisdictional Framework for Water Management, in 1 Resources for Tomorrow Background Papers, 223 (1961).

As to what court should hear the matter, the Federal Government has provided in section 19 of The Federal Court Act² that disputes of this kind may be decided in the Federal Court, Trial Division, with appeal to its Appellate Division and then to the Supreme Court of Canada. Although it is a voluntary scheme, both British Columbia and Alberta have passed legislation submitting themselves to that Court's jurisdiction.³

Unfortunately, neither the B.N.A. Act nor the Federal Court Act indicates which law should be applied in the determination of that dispute. There are perhaps three possible answers and, as to which would be followed, it is not possible to predict. Firstly; it could choose to apply the law of one of the Provinces involved, but of which Province, Alberta or of British Columbia? There are "conflict of law" rules, which could lead to the choice of either. Because the statutes of both of these provinces are relatively similar, perhaps, it would not be a major obstacle to either of them. Secondly, the court could hold that the dispute should be adjudicated, not on the statutory enactment of the particular province, but rather on the basis of the inherited law of that Province on the date it was created. This would uphold the principle that provincial legislatures do not enjoy the power to enact statutes which materially derogate or abridge those civil rights which would normally be enjoyed outside of the province. There is the possibility that the court would hold that the effect upon civil rights

2. Can. Stat. 1970 c. 1.

3. Alta. Stat. 1965 c. 29, B.C. Rev. Stat. 1960 c. 141.

outside of the province was merely incidental with regard to the valid exercise of intra-provincial powers. In the third place, the Federal Court could create a form of constitutional common law whose principles would be appropriate only to inter-jurisdictional disputes. On what principles this body of law would be created it is difficult to say; however, the experience of the United States Courts in similar situations might be helpful.⁴ The range of approaches available would include: the "Harmon Doctrine" attitude that the upstream province has the unfettered right to use the water as it pleases; the view that the lower riparian has an absolute right to receive all of the natural flow undiminished; or the "equitable apportionment" view, whereby a court in the light of all the surrounding circumstances decides whether a particular use of the water by one jurisdiction is equitable.⁵ Although this view of equitable apportionment has not been a feature of private water law in Canada, the concept of "reasonable use" in Anglo-Canadian jurisprudence has essentially the same results.

It would, therefore, appear that both the Alberta Government and the Government of Canada, as lower riparians, could initiate an action in the

4. See Clark, Waters and Water Rights, Vol. 11, 1967, MacKenzie, Inter-provincial Rivers in Canada; A Constitutional Challenge 1 U.B.C. L. Rev. 499, Goldenberg, Legal Aspects of the S.S.R.D. project, in the Report of the Royal Commission on the S.S.R.P. 159 (1952).

5. For a concise discussion of these doctrines, see, Bourne, International Law and Pollution of International Rivers and Lakes, 6 U.B.C. L. Rev. 115, at 118-120 (1971).

Federal Court against the Province of British Columbia.⁷

The British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority Act⁸ enacts, in part:

52 (1) The Authority may sue and be sued in its own corporate name in respect of any right or obligation acquired or incurred by it on behalf of Her Majesty as if the right or obligation had been acquired or incurred on its own behalf and also in respect of any liabilities in tort to which it is made subject by this Act.

(2) The Authority is liable in tort for the damages for which if it were a private person of full age and capacity it would be subject

(a) in respect of torts committed by its servants or agents; and

(b) in respect of a breach of duty attaching to the ownership, occupation, possession or control of property.

(3) No action or other proceeding lies against the Authority or against a servant or agent of the Authority or against Her Majesty in respect of

(a) any claim against the Authority or a servant or agent of the Authority if a pension or compensation has been paid or is payable out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund or out of any funds administered by an agent of Her Majesty in respect of the death, injury, damage or loss in respect of which the claim is made; or

(b) an act or omission of a servant or agent of the Authority unless the act or omission would, apart from this section, have given rise to a cause of action in tort against that servant or agent or his personal representative.

7. For a discussion of the problems of inter-jurisdictional community, see, Gibson, Inter-jurisdictional Immunity in Canadian Federalism, 47 Can. B. Rev. 41 (1969), Mundell, Legal Nature of Federal and Provincial Executive Governments, 2 Osgoode L.J. 56 (1960).

8. B.C. Stat. 1964 c. 7, as amended B.C. Stat. 1966 c. 38.

(4) In all proceedings to which the Authority is a party, the Court or Judge may pronounce a judgment or make an order or direction as to costs in favour of or against the Authority.

52A. Notwithstanding section 52, the Authority is not liable in an action based on nuisance or on the rule in Rylands v. Fletcher, unless the Authority was negligent.

52B. Every action brought against the Authority or any of its servants or agents, arising out of the works or operation of the authority

(a) in respect of torts committed by its servants or agents;

(b) in respect of a breach of duty attaching to the ownership, occupation, possession, or control of property; or

(c) in respect of any contract with the Authority relating to the electric, gas, or transportation service furnished by the Authority,

shall be commenced within, and not later than, twelve months after the cause of action arose or twelve months after the enactment of the Power Measures Act, 1966, whichever is later.

Thus, although the Authority is liable in tort, its ability to be held liable in an action based on nuisance arises only when the Authority has been negligent.⁹ Further, under section 52 (b) the period of limitation is twelve months after the cause of action arose.

Therefore, in all probability, a private person commencing an action against the Authority in the courts of British Columbia would be bound by such exactments. This would have the effect of subjecting persons in Alberta who suffered loss as a result of the construction of the Bennett Dam to the legislation of the Province of British Columbia.

9. Id. section 52 (A).

The problems inherent in a private action have been rather amply canvassed¹⁰ and at the moment there is a private action pending in the Supreme Court of British Columbia relative to this problem.

It would appear that the basis of such a claim would be framed in negligence, the key to the success of which would be to prove that the damage occurring in the Delta was a reasonably foreseeable result of the Peace River Power Project.

Nuisance is in this case the unreasonable use of the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority's land in British Columbia in a fashion that has unreasonably interfered with the use of land of private parties in Alberta. As to whether or not such uses as trapping, fishing and hunting are susceptible to protection by the law or that the interference with such uses was unreasonable is presently obscure. There is some authority¹¹ to indicate that at common law recovery could be obtained for any damage whether to proprietary interests or not.

Insofar as such parties are riparian owners, they could perhaps also claim in that capacity on the basis of the upper riparians' unreasonable diminishment of the water of the Peace River.

10. Lucas & Franson, Legal Liabilities in Water Projects, in Peace Athabasca Delta Symposium 268 (1971), Stark, Liability for Water Impoundment Effects in British Columbia, 1971 (unpublished).

11. The King v. Southern Power Co., 1937 3 D.L.R. 737, at 744.

In addition to the problem as to in what form the action should be framed there is the basic question of the "locus standi" of private parties to bring such an action. There is some indication that, whenever damage is suffered by the public at large, an action may only be brought by the appropriate Attorney-General. In the absence of a suit by the Attorney-General, the private parties would be required to show that they have been "specially injured" to a degree greater than that suffered by the general public. Prima facie, the Indians and Metis of the Delta area, dependent to an extent greater than the general public upon hunting, fishing and trapping, may be able to show such special injury. However, as noted earlier, the property in those natural resources susceptible in hunting, fishing, or trapping are vested in either the Crown in the right of Alberta or the Crown in the right of Canada.

REMEDIAL WORK

An analysis of the Statement of Claim and the Statement of Defence filed in the suit pending indicates that all of these issues have been joined; and, although speculation may be made as to the probable outcome, it would be, perhaps, redundant.

The responsibility for the cost of remedial work in the Peace-Athabasca Delta area is dependent upon the substantive question as to whether or not the liability can be determinately fixed with regard to the situation. Liability in this situation, therefore, depends upon the outcome of a legal action in which such a question would be decided. The Federal Government, whose proprietary interests have been affected, could maintain an action in tort, posited in either negligence or nuisance against the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority. The Forum for such litigation should be the Federal Court of Canada. The Act¹ establishing that Court grants the Trial Division concurrent original jurisdiction in proceedings of a civil nature in which the Crown or the Attorney General of Canada claims relief.² Such relief includes every species of relief whether by way of damages, payment of money, injunction, or declaration.³

Should the Crown in right of Canada initiate such an action, then it is subject to the duty to mitigate its damages. The fundamental meaning of "mitigation" concerns the avoiding of the consequences of an alleged wrong and the rule may be stated succinctly as follows: Firstly; The Crown, as plaintiff, must take all reasonable steps to mitigate the loss consequent upon the alleged wrongful act of the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority and cannot recover damages for any loss which could thus have been avoided, but was not, through unreasonable action or inaction. In other

1. Can. Stat. 1970 c. 1.

2. Id. section 4(a).

3. Id. section 2(m).

words, the Crown could not recover for avoidable loss. Secondly, if the Crown in right of Canada does take reasonable steps to mitigate the loss consequent to the alleged wrong, then the cost incurred in so doing is recoverable. Succinctly put, this means that the cost expended in all reasonable attempts to avoid greater damage is recoverable.

The rationale behind the rule is grounded in both logic and common sense. The requirement that an alleged sufferer of a wrong, in law, should take all reasonable steps to mitigate the loss suffered is correlative to the rule that damages will not be allowed in respect of any part of the alleged loss which is due to the neglect of the claimant to take such reasonable steps.

The question as to whether such remedial work as is undertaken in the Peace-Athabasca Delta constituted a reasonable attempt to mitigate the Crown's damages is a question of fact, not law.⁴ The amount in which such costs, expended on reasonable remedial work, could be recovered is a difficult question and would depend on whether or not, in the unique facts of this situation, the courts would apply the old rule which held that, in cases of damage to land, the diminution of its value rather than the cost of replacement or repair furnished the proper scale at least when the extra cost would be disproportionate. I suspect they would not, since the remedial work as presently contemplated would appear to be a very small amount compared to the diminution in the value of the land, if such could be calculated.⁵

4. Payzu v. Saunders, 1919 2 K.B. 581.

5. See Mayne and McGregor on Damages, 740-753.

THE BASIS FOR THE RELEASE OF WATER

The Federal Government in an action against British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority is enabled under the Federal Court Act¹ to obtain relief by way of an injunction. This equitable remedy, if it were granted, could be the means whereby water in a certain flow pattern would have to be released by the proprietors of the Bennett Dam. The Federal Government's right of action could be based not only on section 17 (4) but also on section 22 (1). An injunction, if it were issued, is enforceable under Rules 1903-1906 of that court. Case law indicates formidable obstacles in the way of an injunction, such as is suggested being granted, as the general rule is that such relief will not be granted if it requires constant supervision by the court. As has been noted earlier the only statutory basis, apparently, for requiring British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority to release water resides in section 20 (10) of the Fisheries Act.

1. Can. Stat. 1970 c. 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The legal, constitutional and administrative issues raised by the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project are a vivid example of the regime under which water management in Canada is conducted. To a degree the responsibility for such complexity and confusion must be said to stem from the constitutional regime under which it takes place.

There was no need in 1867 for the framers of the British North America Act when they assigned jurisdiction, either exclusively or concurrently, over "matters coming within certain classes of subject" to the two levels of government, to consider either water or environmental management as a class of subject.

That in itself was not, upon reflection, disastrous, for a "subject" such as water management in Canada, containing within itself so many aspects, can be dealt with in some of its aspects best by either the regional or central authority. Thus, with co-operation, all need not be bad within the present framework.

It is apparent that there are some matters, especially the management of waters of inter-provincial rivers, which desperately require rationalization both constitutionally and administratively. The problems which can arise through the unilateral management of such water by one province to the detriment of another are evidenced by the Peace Power Project.

Other writers¹ have carefully catalogued the various heads of legislative authority by means of which both federal and provincial jurisdiction over water may be exercised. It is a bewildering exercise, and means that for one and the same body of water, both the federal and provincial governments may have, at different locations, proprietary interests in that water. Further, the same governments may be exercising legislative jurisdiction over that same body of water at the same time and in the same location, under a virtual multitude of their powers.

The Canada Water Act² provides, initially, for federal-provincial co-operation in water management and, if need be, unilateral federal action. Such unilateral action may be taken with respect to any inter-jurisdictional waters where there is a significant national interest in their management.³ It is unfortunate, in my opinion, that the constitutional basis for the exercise of that action is premised upon a certain view of the federal general (or residuary power). I hasten to add that I am also of the opinion the Act as a whole is intra vires of the federal legislative authority.

The Canada Water Act is just another example of the "compartmentalized"

1. La Forrest, The Constitutional Position, in 1(11) Water Resources Study of the Atlantic Province.
Laskin, Jurisdictional Framework for Water Management, in 1 Resources for Tomorrow Conference 211 (1961).

2. Can. Stat. 1970 c. 5.

3. Id. section 5 (1) (b).

approach of federal draftsmen to the legislative grant of power to the federal government under the B.N.A. Act, which for so long has characterized federal legislation related to water. Thus the Navigable Waters Protection Act⁴ and the Canada Shipping Act⁵ are tied into section 91 (10); The Fisheries Act⁶, into section 91 (12); and The Migratory Birds Convention Act,⁷ into section 132. Their administration then devolves upon various departments, certain of whose responsibilities are often identical and are exercised at the same time, in the same location, over the same body of water.

Jurisprudentially, the source of that approach is the result of judicial decisions which elevated the enumerated section over the "general power" in section 91, resulting in the necessity for federal draftsmen to indicate with some exactitude the "particular" head of power under which a particular federal act fell. The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in Munro v. N.C.C.⁸ provides a new opening, in my opinion, for greater creativity and daring on the part of the federal government in areas which clearly do not devolve upon the provincial governments under their legislative powers in section 91.

4. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 193 (1952).

5. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 29 (1952).

6. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 119 (1952).

7. Can. Rev. Stat. c. 1-9 (1952).

8. 1966 Sup. Ct. 663.

In this manner the federal government need not rely solely upon section 92 (10) (a), 92 (10) (c), 91 (2), 91 (10), 91 (27), 91 (24), 91 (12), and 94, or any combination in order to establish its jurisdiction over inter-jurisdictional waters. Such waters clearly go beyond "local or provincial interests" and often are the concern of Canada as a whole. The fact that such federal legislation might affect "property and civil rights in the province"⁹ could be viewed as being only incidental. As Cartwright J. said in the Munro case:

...once it is determined that the matter in relation to which the Act is passed falls within the power of Parliament it is no objection to its validity that its operation will affect civil rights in the Provinces.¹⁰

Earlier he had indicated that the court in Johannesson v. R.M. of West St. Paul¹¹ had adopted as the true test in the determination of legislative authority of the federal parliament under the general clause of section 91 that formulated by Viscount Simon in 1946¹² who had said:

In their Lordships' opinion, the true test must be found in the real subject matter of the legislation. If it is such that it goes beyond local or provincial concern or interests and must from its inherent nature be the concern of the Dominion as a

9. B.N.A. Act section 91 (13),

10. Supra note 7, at 671.

11. 1952 1 Sup. Ct. 292.

12. A.G. Ontario v. Canada Temperance Federation, 1946 A.C.193.

whole (as, for example, in the Aeronautics case and the Radio case), then it will fall within the competence of the Dominion Parliament as a matter affecting the peace, order and good government of Canada, though it may in another aspect touch on matters specially reserved to the provincial legislatures.¹³

If the federal government is either unable or unwilling to attempt such a legislative approach to the water management of inter-jurisdictional waters, then early steps should be taken to more effectively use the legislative powers of which it is presently certain. The Peace-Athabasca Delta demonstrates to a degree the inability of the legislation viewed to cope adequately with such a situation. Specific reference has earlier been made to those statutes and their provisions; and, if they are to be effective in similar situations in the future, both their contents and administration need to be strengthened. A review of the vast majority of cases relevant to "navigation" and "fisheries" (especially the former) indicates that there is still latitude for further legislative enactment.

In my opinion, legislative action on either of these basis would minimize a re-occurrence of a Peace-Athabasca Delta situation. Co-operation between the jurisdictions is today fashionable; however, the results are often mere compromises, and such co-operation should not take the place of clear and decisive legislative action.

13. Id. at 205.

A PERSPECTIVE STUDY
OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF FORT CHIPEWYAN

ALLISON GILL

- 1972 -

Purpose of Study

The socio-economic study of Fort Chipewyan is more meaningful if the facts are considered in relation to characteristics of other similar Indian settlements across Canada. The aim was to select comparative data from communities similar in size and economic base to Fort Chipewyan, thus giving national perspective to the Fort Chipewyan data.

The study was limited however by the severe lack of comparable data. Information has largely been obtained from various economic studies and thus the choice of settlements has been restricted. A further drawback of obtaining such information is that the studies have been carried out at different times, and data are often not in comparable forms. This has in some cases necessitated generalisation of information.

Study Settlements

The following settlements have been considered (Figure 1) - Fort Simpson, N.W.T., Rae, N.W.T., Lac La Biche, Alberta, Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan, Rupert House, Quebec, Mistassini, Quebec. Each community is roughly comparable in size to Fort Chipewyan (Table 2); all have a predominantly Indian population and, with the exception of Lac La Biche and Fort Simpson, they are isolated with no road communications. In the case of Fort Simpson, data obtained is prior to 1970, when the road was constructed. Lac La Biche, although not isolated, nevertheless displays many socio-economic similarities to Fort Chipewyan.

FIGURE 1

LOCATION OF SETTLEMENTS



Population Characteristics

Table I shows the general ethnic characteristics of the communities, which in all cases are predominantly Indian.

TABLE I
ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Indian	Percentage Metis	Other
Fort Chipewyan	62 (Cree, Chipewyan)	30	8
Fort Simpson	57 (Slave)	11	32
Rae	(Dogrib)	N/A	
Lac La Biche	(Cree)	N/A	
Pelican Narrows	81 (Cree)	14	5
Rupert House	(Cree)	N/A	
Mistassini	(Cree)	N/A	

A more detailed description of population characteristics is presented only for settlements in Alberta and the N.W.T.*

*Information is available for all enumeration areas across Canada from a computer programme at the Department of Sociology, University of Alberta. However, many E.A.'s in Northern Canada are ill-defined and cover large areas, and were considered to be of little comparative value in this study.

TABLE 11
TOTAL POPULATION AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE

	Total Population 1961	Total Population 1966	Percentage Change 1961-1966	Estimated Total Population 1970	Percentage Change 1966-1970
Fort Chipewyan	717	1026	+43	1600	+56
Fort Simpson	562	712	+27	750	+ 5
Rae	522	779	+49	1150	+47
Lac La Biche	1314	1490	+13	N/A	
Pelican Narrows	628	N/A		N/A	
Rupert House	1000-1500 (est.)	N/A		N/A	
Mistassini	1000-1500 (est.)	N/A		N/A	

A rapid natural increase in population similar to that at Fort Chipewyan is exhibited at Rae. In both communities the population has approximately doubled in the last ten years, and there has been little out-migration from the settlements. Fort Simpson's growth has been slower, partly a reflection of a larger white segment within the community. The comparatively slower growth of Lac La Biche between 1961 and 1966 may be due to a higher rate of out-migration. These characteristics are further clarified if one considers the age and sex characteristics of the four communities (Figure 2). It is noticeable that there are proportionally more children aged four and under at Fort Chipewyan (20.5%) and Rae (18.0%) than at the other two communities.

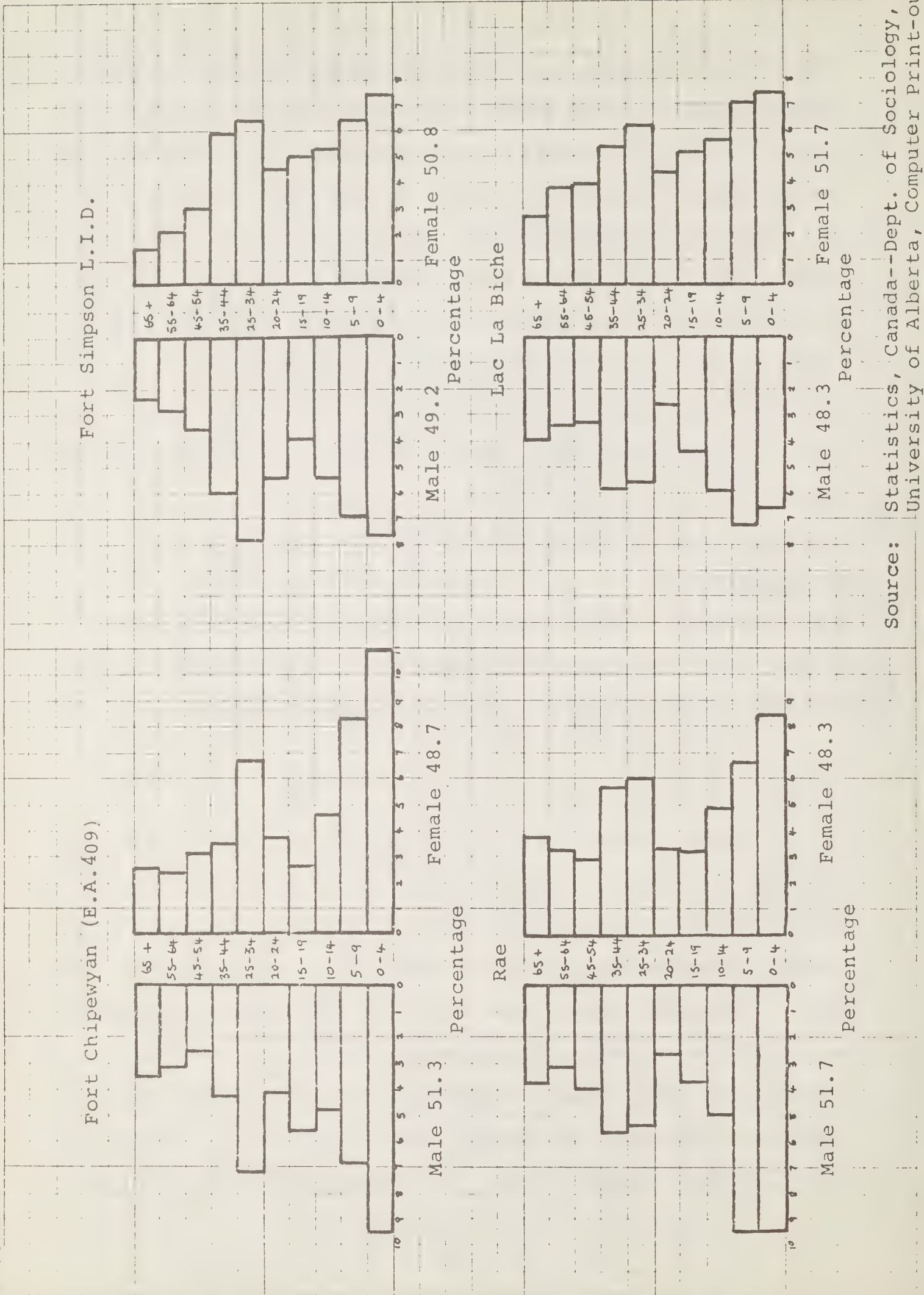
The Economy

Due to the lack of comparable statistics it is not possible to tabulate economic data. Each community is therefore discussed separately and comparisons made with the economy of Fort Chipewyan wherever possible.

Fort Chipewyan

In 1970 forestry provided the greatest single source of earned income, contributing 22.5 per cent to the total annual income of residents, and employing 19 per cent of the male labor force. However as pointed out, continued logging income is unlikely due to the development of Wood Buffalo National Park. Trapping represented 17 per cent of the 1970 income and has been the most significant income source over the past decade. Sixty-one per cent of the male labor force engage in trapping but only 10-15 per cent can be considered serious trappers and few earn enough to support their families without an additional source of income. The average gross income from trapping

FIGURE 2



is \$500 with only one trapper earning over \$4,000. Government departments provide employment for 14 men (4% of M.L.F.) as well as three women. A further 40 men (11% M.L.F.) are engaged in local businesses and services. Additional local part-time employment is available doing fire-fighting and in construction work. Average earned income dropped from \$526 in 1965 to \$380 in 1970. Welfare represented 25 per cent of the total income of Fort Chipewyan residents.

Fort Simpson

Fort Simpson acts as an administrative centre for an area somewhat larger than the Lower Liard District thus government activities provide more sources of employment than are available at Fort Chipewyan. Table IV shows the distribution of income by sources for 1967-68.

Trapping is slightly less important in the economy than at Fort Chipewyan. Social assistance also is proportionally less than at Fort Chipewyan. Thirty-three per cent of the Indian/Metis labour potential is utilised compared to 22 per cent at Fort Chipewyan. The average per capita income in 1967-68 was \$739 for Indians and \$903 for Metis (including unearned income).

Rae

No detailed figures are available and the main sources of employment are summarised in Table III. The D.I.A.N.D. area economic survey notes however that trapping is declining due to the increasing ease of obtaining means of subsistence from other sources. This would also appear to be a contributory factor in the decline of trapping at Fort Chipewyan during recent years. Handicrafts have been developed on a larger scale at Rae than at Fort Chipe-

TABLE III
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Fort Chipewyan	-	Trapping, Forestry, Barging and Mining, Government, Local Service and Business
Fort Simpson	-	Government, Trapping, Local Service and Business Construction
Rae	-	Hunting, Trapping, Fishing, Handicrafts, Forestry, Local Service and Business
Lac La Biche	-	Fishing, Trapping, Forestry, Local Service and Business
Pelican Narrows	-	Trapping, Fishing, Fire Fighting, Construction
Rupert House	-	Trapping, Hunting Guiding, Canoe Manufacturing
Mistassini	-	Trapping, Mining, Guiding, Construction, Transport and Surveys

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME BY SOURCES FOR 1967-68, FORT SIMPSON, N.W.T.

	Wages		Trapping	Handicraft	Social Allowances	Social Assistance
	Gov't.	Private				
Indian	49.5	21.0	10.4	1.5	11.9	5.6
Metis	59.1	18.9	1.2		16	4.7
White (Permanent Residents)	14.8	82.5			2.6	0.05

wyan but recently there have been problems. A local co-operative contributes somewhat to the local economy and is involved in wood-cutting, handicrafts and the sale of fish and berries. Welfare payments constitute 10-15 per cent of the total cash income of the Rae residents. (Additional information for the total Dog Rib Rae band is incorporated with figures for Mistassini and Rupert House).

Lac La Biche

No detailed information is available. However the fact that 69 per cent of residents receive welfare is some indication of the state of the economy.

Pelican Narrows

Of a total labor force of 115 only 3 have year-round jobs. All the rest are trappers. The average income from trapping in 1959-60 was \$586 per trapper which is slightly higher than the Fort Chipewyan income. Most trappers supplement their income, a few engage in commercial fishing but returns are low. The only other local sources of employment are casual summer jobs such as fire-fighting and construction. Sixteen per cent of the residents left Pelican Narrows to obtain additional seasonal employment. The average per capita earned income in 1959-60 was only \$138, although welfare and social allowance payments added an additional \$100 per capita.

As in Fort Chipewyan, the greatest population of residents in the communities engage in trapping, but as indicated by the large number (Table V) of those in each community who are employed for less than six months there is little availability of additional employment.

TABLE V
MISTASSINI, RUPERT HOUSE, DOG RIB RAE*
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR FORCE 1963

	Mistassini	Rupert House	Dog Rib Rae
Per Capital Real Income	341	174	332
Forestry	8.1	7.8	8.0
Fishing	2.9	-	12.3
Guiding	2.3	10.4	-
Handicrafts	-	-	4.0
Casual Unskilled	27.6	5.2	28.6
Skilled	2.3	-	-
Clerical	2.5	-	4.3
Trapping	54.3	62.3	42.5
Percentage Employed Less than Six Months	62.3	52.5	66.2
Percentage of Households Receiving Welfare	84.75	21.4	18.5

*Dogrib Indian settlements include, Rae (712), Lac La Martre (136), Snare Lake (69), Rae Lake (80), Hislop Lake (34), Marian Lake (93).

Community Information

TABLE VI
SERVICE FACILITIES

	Fort Chipewyan	Pelican Narrows	Fort Simpson	Rae
School	2	x	2	x
Hospital	-	x	x	x
Indian Affairs	x	x	x	x
Government Agency	x	x	2	-
Mission	x	x	2	x
Stores	2	3	2	2
Nursing Station	x	-	x	-
Community Hall	x	-	x	x
Hotel	x	-	x	-
Miscellaneous Business	x	x	4	2
Airport	x	-	x	-
RCMP	x	-	x	x

Education

Comparable statistics are not available on educational levels but the following summary of available data indicates that in all communities levels of attainment are low.

Fort Chipewyan	-	50% no formal education
Mistassini	-	3.20% aged 16 and over in school
Rupert House	-	4.51% aged 16 and over in school
Lac La Biche	-	19% residents with over 6 years school, 45.6% no formal education.

Conclusion

Despite the incomplete data on the communities considered it would appear that Fort Chipewyan is fairly typical of other isolated Indian settlements across Canada. Not one of the communities has a sound economic base. Only a small proportion of the labor force has full-time employment and there is a high level of unemployment and underemployment with a heavy dependence on welfare and other social allowances. Traditional sources of livelihood such as trapping and hunting appear to be declining as a major source of income in many communities as alternative means of subsistence are available. The rate of natural increase amongst Indian settlements is high and there is a low mobility rate, thus the communities have all outgrown their sources of income. Fort Simpson appears to be the most economically sound community and it will be interesting to consider its economic growth as a result of the recent road development as an indication of the possible effects of a road to Fort Chipewyan.

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SECTION E

**A
RECREATION - TOURISM STUDY
OF
LAKE ATHABASCA AND ENVIRONS**



June 23, 1972

File 46-3-72

Peace Athabasca Delta Project,
512 Baker Centre,
10025 - 106 Street,
Edmonton 14, Alberta

Attention: Mr. D. Hornby, P. Eng., Director

Dear Sir:

Re: Recreation - Tourism Study

We are pleased to present herewith our report entitled "A Recreation-Tourism Study of Lake Athabasca and Environs". In accordance with the terms of reference the Study has oriented itself to the examination of the recreation-tourism component of the Peace Athabasca Delta Project almost exclusively from the Saskatchewan side.

Needless to say the load was much lightened by the co-operation received from your staff. For this and your patience we gratefully extend our appreciation.

We trust you will find the study to your satisfaction.

Respectfully submitted,

EPEC CONSULTING LTD.

Harry S. Zuzak, P. Eng.
President

HSZ/mp

FORWARD

This report was prepared by EPEC Consulting Ltd. in response to a joint request by the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan as represented by the Parks and Recreation Branch of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Peace Athabasca Delta Project. Following several meetings, the terms of reference were refined and an agreement was signed March 10, 1972 to carry out the work.

In general, the terms of reference necessitated: the documentation and assessment of present levels of recreation and tourism activities in Lake Athabasca and environs, from the Saskatchewan point of view, and any changes therein with respect to significant changes in the level of Lake Athabasca; determination of constraints and identification of factors which would foster the recognized potentials; assessment of the net effect upon Lake Athabasca and environs of recognized potentials, positive factors and constraints; identification of the roles of governments and opportunities for local participation in potential recreation and tourism activities.

The study was under the direction of Mr. H.S. Zuzak. Major inputs were made by Mr. K.A. Johnson, recreation planner who was responsible for most of the basic research, Mr. H.O. Franson, recreation specialist and Dr. W.W. Zuzak, research analyst. An evaluative function was performed by Mr. D.H. O'Donnell, Senior Planner of P.E./Recreation Research and Planning Ltd. A large measure of guidance and co-operation was provided by Mr. C.H. Burton, Director, Parks and Recreation Branch of the Department of Natural Resources, Province of Saskatchewan; Mr. D.M. Hornby, Director, Peace Athabasca Delta Project; and Mr. M.G. Pahl of the Peace Athabasca Delta Project.

In keeping with the terms of reference and subsequent meetings, raw study data was provided April 15, 1972 and an interim report was submitted May 23, 1972. This final report is a condensation and refinement of the interim report subsequently modified following a field visitation.

As the recreation and tourism component of the Peace Athabasca Delta Project, it is hoped that this study will assist in the overall intended course of action of the project.

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I INTRODUCTION

A. Delineation of the Region

For purposes of study "Lake Athabasca and environs" has been delineated as that area in northern Saskatchewan bounded by 58° and 60° North latitude and 104° and 110° West longitude. Hereafter this area will be referred to as the "Lake Athabasca region" or just "the region".

This region is sufficiently large to encompass the main part of the drainage basin as well as areas of major recreational potential in the environs of Lake Athabasca. In addition, this same area coincides with an administrative region of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

B. Background

The Lake Athabasca Region is a large, remote area of approximately 38,600 square miles, sparsely populated and distant from major population centres. The greatest asset of the region for tourism and other economic activities is definitely the splendor of the region's natural resources. While its human resources and man-made physical resources are relatively sparse, the quality of the natural resources of the area proffers a strong base upon which to build up these human and structural resources.

While the isolation of the region may be an asset to certain tourism activities, this isolation at the same time represents a liability in terms of difficulties in developing the service facilities to support a broadened recreational activity base. At present, the region is devoid of a road system linking the area to population centres to the south and as a consequence, virtually all traffic to and from the area is by air.

Situated on the Canadian Shield within the Boreal Forest Zone, the rugged scenic landscape of the area is well endowed with lakes, river systems and waterfalls. The region has an abundance of sport fish, game birds and game animals. The unique quality of the Athabasca Sand Dunes gives the area a character of outstanding and dramatic natural beauty.

As recreation and tourism is one of the major growth industries in the Western world, (with \$1.3 billion being spent by visitors to Canada in 1971), there exists a demand on global scale which warrants the careful consideration of beautiful virgin northern areas such as the Lake Atha-

basca region for future tourism development. As a major study of the recreational and tourism potential of a northern Canadian region, it is hoped that the general findings will be applicable to subsequent northern research projects in this field.

C. Relationship of Existing Resources and Climate to Tourism

1. Human Resources Inventory

The population in the region is very sparse, with Uranium City and district, Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac, and the Indian Reserves on the Fond du Lac River being the centers of population (see Map 1). A breakdown of the population in the region is given below:

	Total	English Speaking	French Speaking	Other Languages
Uranium City	2,209	1,582	131	496
Uranium City District	86			
Stony Rapids	180			
			(estimated Whites = 30%)	
			(estimated Metis = 70%)	
Treaty Indians:				
Fond du Lac Band	555			
Stony Rapids Band	<u>478</u>			
Total Population	3,508			

For the Treaty Indians in the region, information is available regarding the educational training and employment status of men and women between the ages of 16-55, describing their education, additional qualifications, present location and employment status. Such information is valuable in determining the areas in which these native peoples may become involved in present or future tourist operations. This type of human resource data may be used in the design of a goal-oriented educational or manpower training program which may be set up to facilitate their involvement in the tourist industry.

2. Mineral Resources Inventory

The northern shore of the area of Lake Athabasca is reputed to have a high potential for uranium, nickel, gold and silver as shown on Map 2. Gulf Minerals has an exploration permit on an area just north of Black Lake. Copper and iron ore are present in the vicinity of Black Lake and Fond du Lac.

Possible commercial deposits of uranium have been located on the west edge of Wollaston Lake just to the east of the study area and at Cluff Lake in the southwest sector of the study area. Exploration permits for these and other regions have been obtained by Gulf Minerals, Mokta, Numac Mining, Royal Canadian Ventures and various other companies. Further discoveries in the region will doubtlessly be forthcoming.

To date, mining, commercial fishing, trapping, and tourism have provided an economic base for the region. Of these enterprises, the mining and tourism industries have the greatest potential for expanding while commercial fishing and trapping seem to be on the wane.

Since the potential for commercial deposits of valuable minerals in the Lake Athabasca region is high, there is a strong possibility that mineral development will set the pace for other types of development within the region. As a beneficial side effect of roads and service utilities serving the mining sites in the region, the tourism industry should experience an inflow of tourists as well as reduced costs of construction, transportation and food and services. While there is a danger of conflict between mineral and recreational interests, a comprehensive planning program for the region may be developed to anticipate such problems, so that a diversified economic base may be developed with the various components complimenting rather than obstructing one another.

3. Climatic Inventory

The climate of the Lake Athabasca region is classified as "Cold Snowy Forest" type according to Koeppen's modified classification. This climatic type is typified by a moist, short cool summer with less than four months over 50°F mean temperature. The frost free period is less than 80 days and freezing may be expected even in the warmest month of the year.

The climate of the Lake Athabasca region is characterized by a wide temperature variation between winter and summer, with the mean January and July temperatures being -12°F and +62°F respectively. The

first frost usually occurs in early September while Lake Athabasca begins to freeze over in October. As a rule, freezing temperatures become infrequent in late April but the ice on Lake Athabasca lingers on until mid-June.

The mean daily temperature in the region is 27.5°F, and the mean annual precipitation is 15 inches. The area receives approximately 2,000 hours of bright sunshine per year compared to 2,150 hours at Prince Albert and 2,200 hours at Saskatoon.

The dominant winds in the Lake Athabasca region are northerlies and northwesterlies as compared to dominant westerlies in the southern part of Saskatchewan. Generally, the winds are more variable and weaker in summer than in winter.

The tourist season in the Lake Athabasca region is closely determined by the climate. The main tourism activity commences in the first week in June and continues on until mid-October, when the temperature drops below freezing.

II PRESENT LEVEL OF TOURISM ACTIVITY IN THE LAKE ATHABASCA REGION

A. Overview

Compared to any area of similar size in the southern part of the province, the Lake Athabasca region's annual tourism attendance of approximately 1,200 tourists would be considered a low level of tourism. While the tourist operations are quite spread out and run on an individual basis, those camps which are effectively managed are quite profitable and have a fairly steady clientele.

The only access for tourists coming into the region is by air with Pacific Western Airlines service from Alberta and Norcanair service from within Saskatchewan landing in Uranium City, Fond du Lac and Stony Rapids. In addition, tourists reach the area by private or chartered planes. The fact that Uranium City is the last stop on the regular north-south air route is a limiting factor to bringing tourists to the area.

Considering the natural scenic beauty of the rugged Precambrian Shield land mass, and the outstanding unique quality of the Athabasca Sand

Dunes, the region has a strong physical base which has yet to be tapped in terms of a diversified outdoor recreational activity base. While fly-in sport fishing is presently the basis for virtually all tourism activity in the region, the area is far from saturated with fishing camps. In general, the region is characterized by its remoteness, its low level of recreational activity, and its present reliance on fishing for its tourism.

B. Questionnaire Survey

1. Methodology

In order to document the present level of tourism in the Lake Athabasca region, a questionnaire survey was carried out of the fly-in fishing camps lying inside and outside of the study area. Since the fly-in fishing camps generate virtually all the tourism activity in the study area, this questionnaire survey presents a clear picture of the present level of recreation and tourism activities of Lake Athabasca and environs. Thirty-five (35) questionnaires were sent out, with questionnaires being sent to all 6 camps within the study area, and 29 to camps outside the region. Responses were received from all 6 (100%) of the camp operators within the boundaries of the study area, and from 8 of the 29 camp operators outside of the area. A survey of camps in other areas of northern Saskatchewan accessible by roadway to southern population centres has provided a basis for comparing the isolated camps with accessible ones.

The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions, requesting the operators of the individual fishing camps to document the nature of their operation in terms of facilities, seasonal usage, employment, clientele, expansion plans, problem areas (constraints) and opportunities for improvement (potentials).

A field study of the region served a supportive function to the questionnaire survey, with follow-up interviews of the camp operators being carried out.

2. Survey Results

A summary of information on tourism activity in the study area gathered through the questionnaire survey and substantiated by the field study, follows below.

a) Location of Existing Recreational Camps

The locations of the existing fly-in fishing camps are indicated on Map 3. There are 6 main camps and 6 outpost camps in the region. Two of the main camps are located at the mouth of the Fond du Lac River on Black Lake and are connected by road to Stony Rapids. A houseboat which serves as a mobile fishing camp uses Stony Rapids as its main port and travels westward down the Fond du Lac River where it circles back after reaching about 20 miles into the main part of Lake Athabasca.

The other 3 main camps are located on Tazin Lake, Scott Lake, and Waterbury Lake. These camps are not closely associated with Lake Athabasca or the Fond du Lac River system. The outpost camps are located on Riou Lake (2), Engler Lake, Otherwise River, Unknown River, and Selwyn Lake.

b) Function of Recreation Sites

All 6 respondents listed fishing as the main recreational activity pursued at their camp while one camp also offered hunting during the fall season.

c) Years of Operation

On the average, the existing camps in the region have been operating for 14.8 years. Camps were opened in 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1967, with 2 opening in 1956. All camps plan to continue operating through the 1972 season and years following.

d) Opening and Closing Dates

The average season for the camps in the region is from June 9 to September 24. The camps experience a slight slack period in August due to the fact that family type vacations prevail during this time.

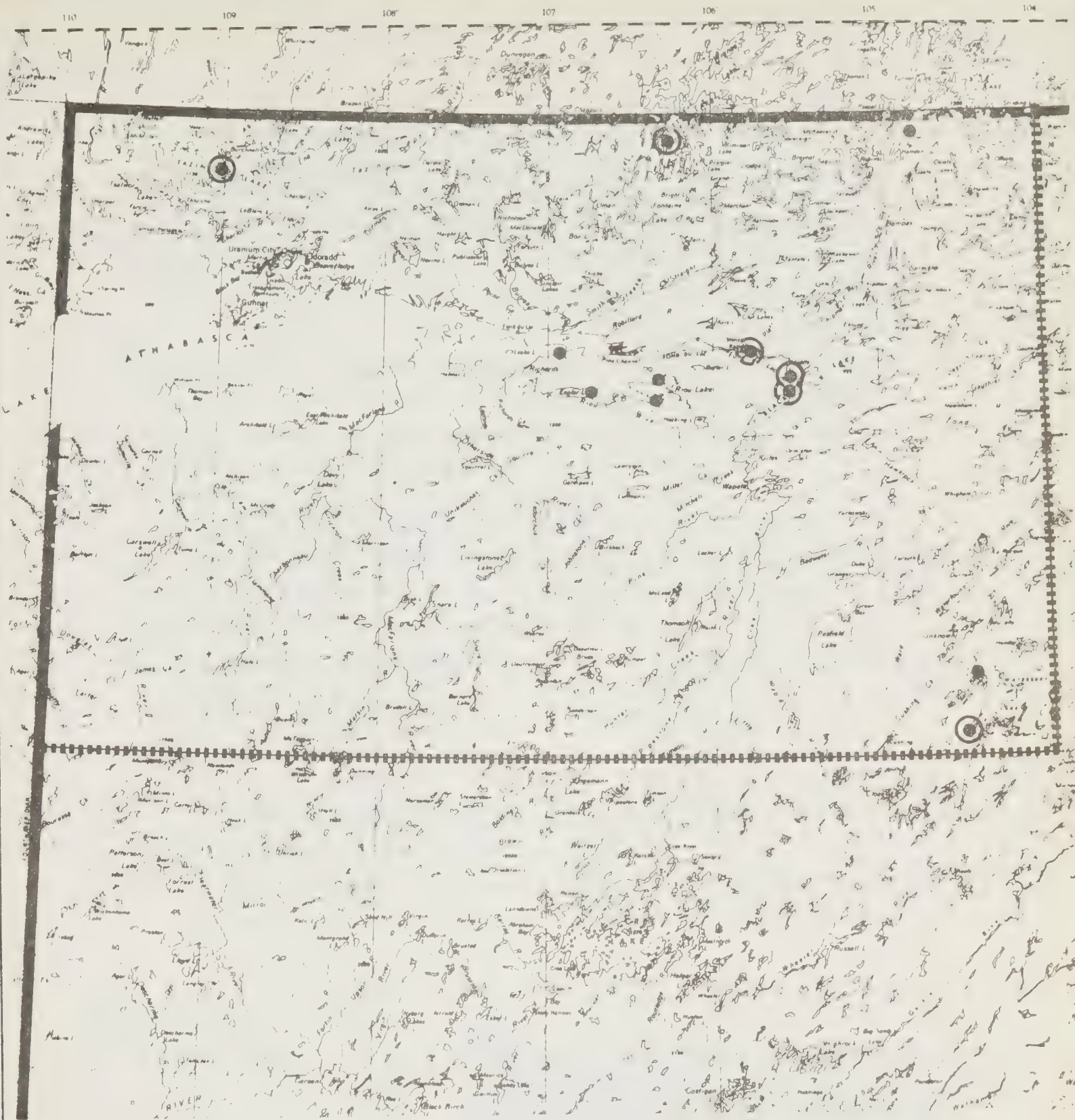
Opening dates are: June 1, June 3, June 8, June 8, June 9 and June 24.

Closing dates are: Sept. 1, Sept. 16, Sept. 21, Sept. 30, Sept. 30, and Oct. 15.

e) Employment

i) Ethnic Origin

From a total of 118 people employed at the 6 camps in the region, 57 employees or 48% are local Indians or Metis, while 12 employees or 10% are Indians or Metis from outside the region. Eight employees or 7% are local white people.



LEGEND

● — OUTPOST CAMPS

⊙ — MAIN CAMPS

EXISTING FISHING CAMPS

MAP

3



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while 41 employees or 35% are white people brought in from outside the region.

ii) Job Function

The most predominant occupation at the camps is guiding, with 75 guides being employed at an average of \$15 per day. Each camp has one manager, earning at least \$500, one cook earning from \$450 - 500 per month, and one or two cabin helpers earning from \$200 - 350 per month. Other jobs involved in the fishing camp operations include a handy man, a secretary, a boat captain and a steward.

f) Accommodation Capacity and Length of Visitor Stay

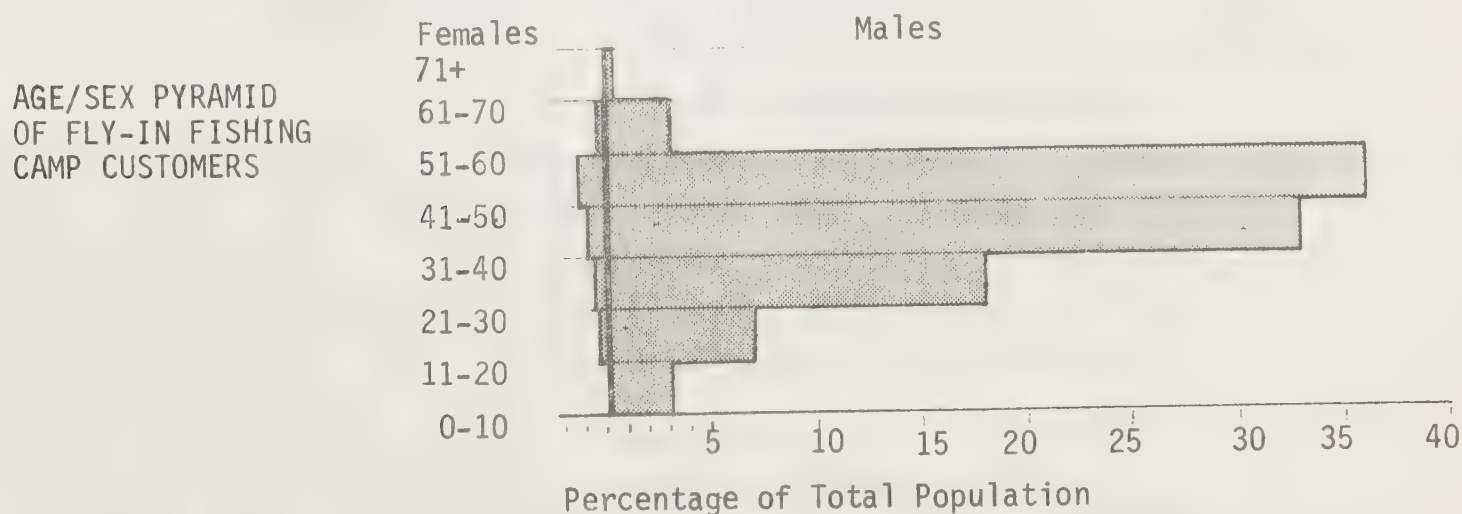
The total number of tourists which visit the 6 fishing camps in an average season is approximately 1,200, which amounts to an average of 200 visitors per camp per season. The six camps are capable of accommodating a total of 190 people at a given time.

g) Profile of Customers

i) Age/Sex

Approximately 94% of the tourists visiting the camps in the region are males, while 6% are female; 94% are adult with 6% being children.

The age/sex pyramid below gives a visual illustration of the profile of the tourists visiting the study area.



Note that the vast majority (87%) of the tourists are in the age category from 31 to 60 years of age, with 18% in their 30's, 33% in their 40's, and 36% in their 50's.

ii) Residence

The tourist population visiting the region is almost exclusively American, with 96% U.S. visitors as compared to 4% Canadian visitors. Well over half, or 67% come from North Middle U.S., with 11% coming from North Eastern U.S., 7% from South Middle U.S., and 5% from each of South Western U.S. and North Western U.S. The remaining 1% of the region's tourists emanate from South Eastern U.S. A further breakdown of the Canadian clientele shows that 3% are Westerners and 1% are Easterners.

iii) Occupation

The predominant occupation of the tourists visiting the region is the "managerial, professional businessmen or private" group, comprising 77% of the tourist population. The "sales personnel, clerical or manufacturing" occupation group makes up 14% of the tourist population, with 8% being in the "construction, labourer" category and 1% being in the "farming" category. Virtually no housewives or students visit the fly-in fishing camps.

iv) Money Spent

The average daily expenditure at the fishing camps was approximately \$74 per person, with \$428 being the average cost of a weekly package plan which includes everything from transportation from the nearest landing strip to the filleting and freezing of fish caught.

h) Transportation Used to Get to Site

Air transportation is the only method of access used by tourists to enter the region from outside. Customers of 5 out of 6 camps use regular scheduled air service and/or a private or chartered pontoon plane to reach the site. Customers to the remaining camp use a private or chartered plane as the main means of access to the site.

i) Facilities and Services Offered on Site

Facilities offered vary from camp to camp with modern cabins, electricity, and indoor plumbing available at 5 out of 6 camps. Between all 5 camps, there are a total of 32 modern cabins, 15 semi-modern cabins, and 6 primitive cabins. All camps offer meal service

and guiding as part of the package. Most camps have motor boats which are either included in the package plan or may be rented separately. There is a total of 98 motor boats in the possession of the 6 camps in the study area.

j) Development and Expansion Plans

Four of the 6 camps in the region had definite plans for expansion, including plans to build outpost camps, a main lodge, dining facilities and an air strip at camp. In total, the cost of the new facilities to the 4 camps will amount to approximately \$70,000. From this expansion, 15 new job openings will evolve.

If they were to expand their tourist operations, 3 camp operators would choose to add to their present facilities while 3 operators would prefer to build facilities in another area nearby.

k) Promotion of Camps

The fishing camp operators felt that their best source of promotion was recommendations from former customers, while their own advertising in magazines, brochures and newspapers was the second best form of attracting tourists. It was felt that the benefits from provincial advertising and from advertising in the Saskatchewan Tourist Guide were minimal. In addition, some camp operators had booking agents situated in various U.S. Cities for tourists to contact for accommodation inquiries and other information.

l) Potential for Other Kinds of Recreational Use Near Existing Sites

Two camp operators felt that the area around their camp could support hunting, as an additional recreational attraction. Two operators felt that their area could support hiking, while 1 camp operator recommended canoeing and camping. Three camp operators would consider developing additional facilities to allow people to participate in these outdoor recreational activities.

m) Economic Considerations

i) Profit/Loss

Those 5 camp operators who responded to the question as to whether or not their camp was profitable last year replied that they did make a profit.

To put a dollar figure on the present level of tourism in the region we may take the approximate number of tourists visiting the area and multiply by the average length of stay and the average daily expenditure of the tourists. For example, an approximation of the aggregate intake of the fishing camp operations in the region may be calculated as follows:

1200	x	6	x	70	=	\$ 504,000
Tourists		Average Stay		Average Daily Expenditure		Aggregate Income

ii) Competition

Competition for camps in the region comes from camps within the area, from those isolated camps bordering the area such as those on Wollaston and Cree Lakes, and even from as far north as Great Bear Lake.

iii) Problem Areas

Transportation or access was cited as the main constraint which the fishing camp operations have to face in attracting tourists to their camps. They felt that improved airline connections and schedules would help alleviate the situation.

Another problem which confronts the fishing camp operations is the bad reputation some camps accrue by misrepresenting the quality of their fishing, accommodation and service. Since goodwill is a key factor in the promotion of tourism in the region, a small number of poor quality camps can be detrimental to the image of the whole region.

iv) Estimated Effect of Road Access from South on Present Tourism Operations

Four out of 6 camp operators felt that a major road connection from the south would have no beneficial effect on their business. One operator felt that such a road would bring about very little improvement to his business, while one operator felt that it would bring about moderate improvement.

It was felt that if access to the region was significantly improved, the camps would have to change their method of operation to cater to a different kind of tourist.

n) Suggestions for Improving Tourism in Northern Saskatchewan

The fishing camp operators of the region suggested three main points that would likely improve the tourism industry of Northern Saskatchewan. Firstly, they suggested enlarging the budget of the provincial tourist bureau, allowing greater advertising of the north by the province. Secondly, it was felt that improved air access to the province from the Mid-western United States would benefit northern tourism. Thirdly, it was suggested that a government grant to the Northern Saskatchewan Outfitters Association would strengthen the organization which represents a large portion of the Northern Saskatchewan tourism industry and thereby strengthen northern tourism at large.

III CHANGES IN THE LAKE LEVELS OF LAKE ATHABASCA AND EFFECTS ON TOURISM

A. Factors Affecting Lake Levels

An historical study of the hydrology of Lake Athabasca has shown that there are cycles where lower water levels occur for a few years followed by high water levels for a few years. These cycles of low and high water levels are widespread over northern Saskatchewan and annual fluctuations in the level of Lake Athabasca appear to be related to cycles of low and high depths of snow in its 112,000 square miles drainage basin.

Studies undertaken in conjunction with the Peace Athabasca Delta Project have shown that the Peace River also has an effect on the levels of Lake Athabasca. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a comprehensive hydrological study of the effects of snow depth in the drainage basin as against the effects of low or high levels on the Peace River (see Map 4).

B. Specific Effects on Tourism of Low Levels on Lake Athabasca

1. Present Lake Level Effects

At present there are only 2 tourism operations on Lake Athabasca, both of which have their headquarters in the eastern arm. There is a houseboat which accommodates 12 persons at a time, and an outpost fishing camp which accommodates 10 persons at a time. In other words, the

tourist facilities on Lake Athabasca have the capacity of accommodating 22 persons at a time, or about 250 tourists over the tourist season. Considering the large area covered by Lake Athabasca, a total of 250 tourists per season represents a very low level of tourism.

At the present time (June, 1972), Lake Athabasca is not experiencing low water levels. However, if low lake levels do occur in the future, the 2 tourist operations on the lake should not be harmed since the fishing camp is situated on a well chosen location, and the houseboat operator is aware of the precautionary measures which must be taken to prevent the boat from becoming land-locked.

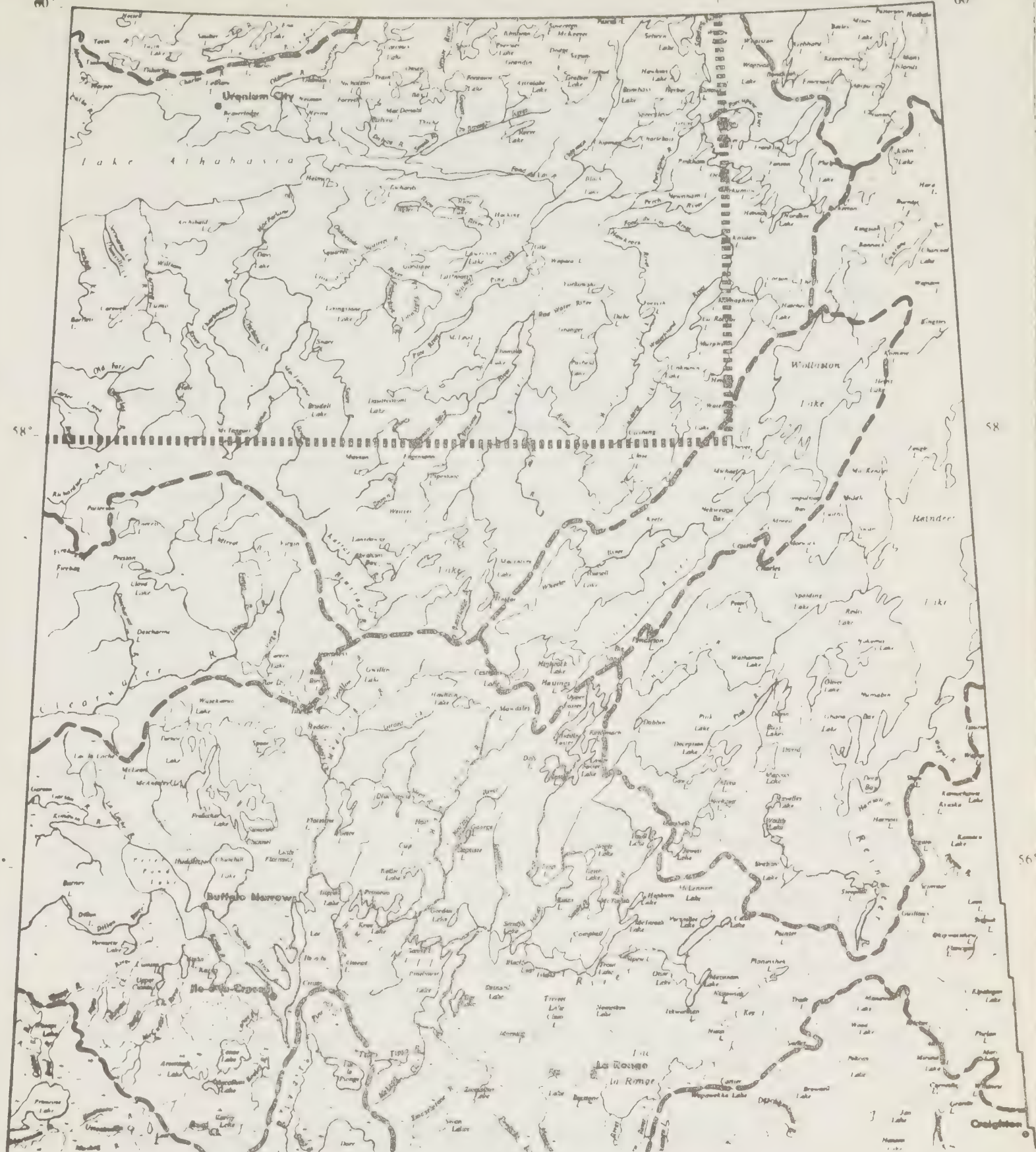
2. Past Lake Level Effects

One fishing camp closed down in 1968 due to a combination of factors: low lake levels and poor site location resulted in the camp being land-locked and thus the operator saw fit to close the camp down permanently. It should be noted that a proper site location would have resulted in the camp not being affected by low lake levels.

The houseboat which operates on the main lake could not operate for the 1968 tourist season, apparently due to its being landlocked. However, the cause of the problem was not solely attributed to one factor, but a combination of low lake levels, and improper mooring methods.

In summary, 2 of the 3 tourist facilities which have operated on Lake Athabasca in recent years, have been affected by low levels on the lake. However, poor site location, poor management and improper mooring methods were as much a cause of failure of the tourist operations as were low lake levels. The fact that the third camp on the lake operated successfully throughout this period of low lake levels indicates that low lake levels do not represent a significant constraint to recreational activities which are properly sited and effectively managed.

There are certain problems connected with low lake levels which cannot be solved by proper site location and effective management.



LEGEND

— DESIGNATES DRAINAGE BASIN BOUNDARIES

DRAINAGE AREAS

MAP

4



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Low levels on Lake Athabasca pose a threat to tourism in that prolonged cycles of low water levels:

- may destroy the spawning grounds of certain species of sport fish
- may destroy the scenic beauty of shoreline areas
- may produce an image of the area as an "ecologically endangered area", making recreation and tourism promotion difficult.

C. General Effects of Low Lake Levels on Lake Athabasca and Environs

Lake Athabasca by itself does not have a high potential for recreation as compared to its surrounding lakeland area because of two predominant factors which are detrimental to the development of successful water-oriented activities; the water is too cold, and the lake is just too large. Strong winds which cross the vast water body stir up high waves and produce daily or hourly fluctuations in lake levels, and as a result, the navigation of small craft on Lake Athabasca is dangerous. Furthermore, since the numerous lakes surrounding Lake Athabasca provide a much more predictable sport fishery, as well as an intimate, secluded natural setting, the recreational potential of Lake Athabasca itself is secondary to its surrounding area.

Fluctuations on Lake Athabasca itself would have marginal, if any effect on areas of recreational potential in the region surrounding the lake.

Since the waters in the environs of Lake Athabasca flow into the lake, they are not affected by fluctuations on the lake. The recreational potential of areas such as the Sand Dunes area, Elizabeth and Woodcock Falls, the MacFarlane River and Falls, the Bulyea and Grease River region, and Lefty's Falls (see Map 6) would not be seriously altered by significant changes in the levels of Lake Athabasca.

IV CONSTRAINTS UPON RECREATION USE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

A. Accessibility

The lack of access to the south (see Map 5) represents the greatest constraint to the development of the tourism potential of the region. With air service being the only access into the area, the tourist market is strictly limited to persons of higher income. The fact that

passenger rates are over 30% higher in the north than those in southern Canada, is a further deterrant to the tourists. For example, the cost of a flight from Edmonton to Uranium City is \$48.00 whereas a flight to an approximately equidistant Regina is \$37.00. It seems likely that if the area were made more accessible by a roadway system, the area could attract large numbers of middle and lower income people, with the middle income group representing a substantial proportion of outdoor recreationists. However, to date there has been a value in keeping the region secluded since the present tourists are seeking out and paying for this seclusion.

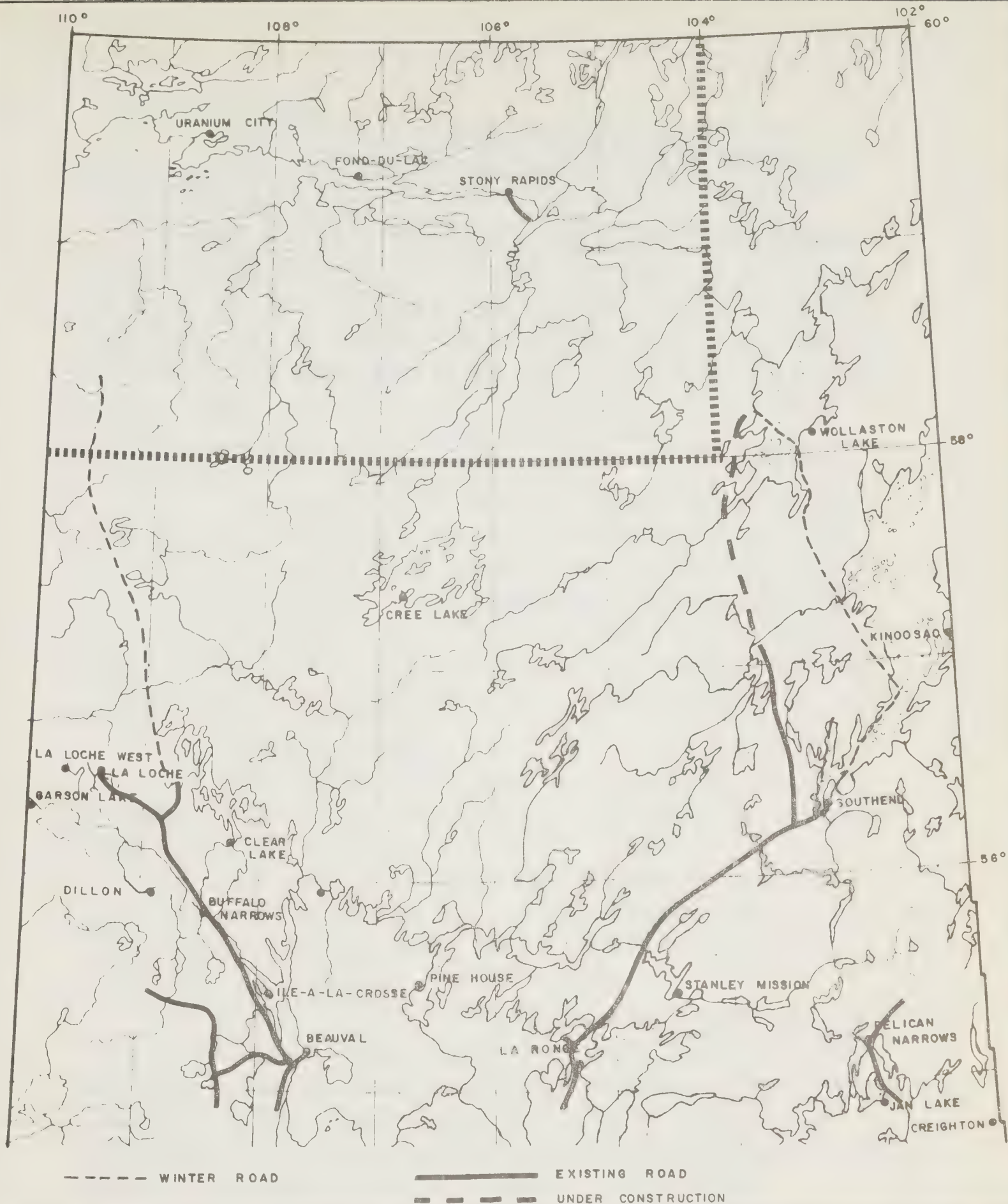
While the tourist is willing to pay \$50 to \$110 per day to use our secluded resources, the question may be asked whether or not this type of tourism industry represents the optimal utilization of the region's resources. An improvement of access to the region may be detrimental to the present tourism operations to a certain degree if the isolation of these camps was imposed on. By opening up certain areas to the masses, the present fishing camp operations may lose customers in the short term or they may be obliged to change the nature of their operation.

However, it is felt that the region is large enough and diversified in terms of its natural resources that it is capable of supporting both isolated resorts and those tourist facilities such as campsites, service stations, etc. which are associated with a roadway system through a recreational region. With proper planning both types of outdoor recreational pursuits may co-exist in the same region, with certain types of recreation centered in wilderness and others in semi-wilderness or even a social setting.

B. No Organized Marketing Strategy

At present there is a lack of proper advertising of the Lake Athabasca region. Such an inability to form an organized marketing strategy for tourism in the region is a constraint to the present tourism industry. The lack of complete addresses of all fishing camps in the Saskatchewan Tourist Guide is evidence that these camps do not present an organized front to their market.

Lack of advertising finances combined with a lack of knowledge of the true recreational potential of northern regions such as the Lake Athabasca region has acted as a constraint to the fostering of its true potential.



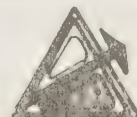
SPREAD OF ROADS

MAP

5



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C. Competitive Factor

Competition from other more accessible northern and southern recreation sites may act as a constraint to the development of tourism in the region.

There are many lakes to the south of the Lake Athabasca region which are accessible via the roads which extend to Lac La Loche and towards Wollaston Lake. However, there is good evidence to suggest that the fishing camps on these accessible lakes are not in direct competition with those on the remote lakes of the north. The clientele of the remote camps is predominantly professional businessmen from the U.S., while the clientele of the more southern camps is split between businessmen and blue collar workers, Canadians and Americans.

The competition for the fly-in fishing camps in the Lake Athabasca region mainly comes from other regions of a similar nature. For example: competition for an expensive fishing operation on Lake Athabasca is from a similar fishing camp operation on Great Bear Lake hundreds of miles away. Certain camps which have direct air access from centers in the U.S. (such as Great Bear Lake) have a competitive advantage over similar camps which require stop off points on the air route.

D. Lack of Service Facilities

The present lack of service facilities which could support alternative types of recreational activity in the region is a constraint which represents a rather complex problem.

Any tourism in the region other than fly-in fishing camps is negligible. The lack of human and physical (man-made) resources in the region limits the recreational opportunities of visitors, and thus limits their length of stay.

Without any facilities to serve the tourists it is not feasible to try to promote an expanded tourism base in the region. A co-ordinated management program would have to be carried out whereby the promotion of tourism ran parallel with the number and quality of tourist facilities. Before private entrepreneurs went ahead with the construction of facilities they would have to be assured of a continued tourist market.

E. Weak Economic Base

The weakness of the economic base of the region is a constraint to the development of a viable outdoor recreation industry. The economy of the region which is based upon mining, commercial fishing, trapping and

tourism is lagging at present due partly to short term problems within the mining industry. The fact that a large proportion of the native population is on welfare is indicative of the region's weak economic base.

It is an accepted fact that in order to develop a large scale tourist industry, human resources are needed to support the industry. Even though there may be good to excellent natural (physical) resources to develop recreation, it is very difficult to build a tourist industry using imported human resources.

To improve the economic base of the region, the tourism potential should be harnessed giving the local people the opportunity of being employed in the tourism industry. Given an inventory of the educational and occupational qualifications of the local populations, a recreation and tourism industry may be designed so as to motivate these human resources in an optimal way. Since tourism is a seasonal activity, the region's overall resources should be planned on a comprehensive basis so as to incorporate the employees into another form of employment for the winter..

F. Conflicting Demands on Resources

Alternate demands on the region's resources represents a constraint to recreation and tourism. A most obvious conflict arises where a recreational resource such as a rapid flowing waterfall becomes designated as an area of prime hydroelectric power potential.

The economics of building a hydro dam at one site as opposed to another alternate site may be measured quite accurately. On the other hand the long term economic benefits of maintaining the aesthetic quality of a region's recreational resources cannot be easily measured. While the economics of an engineering project such as a hydro dam are finite, the economic benefits of conserving the recreational resources for future use are not finite and thus cannot be justified as easily.

V RECREATION AND TOURISM POTENTIALS

A. Natural Resource Base

A combination of physical factors add up to give the Lake Athabasca region a highly scenic quality and a potential of attracting large numbers of tourists over the long term. The rugged landscape of the Precambrian Shield which contains a variety of lakes, rivers, islands, fault-

lines, rock outcrops, marshes, forest, sand hills and grasslands, allows a high quality and varied wilderness experience so important to the outdoor recreationist .

It appears that the region as a whole has a high capability of supporting a diversified recreational activity base which could include some or all of the following outdoor recreational activities:

- fishing, hunting, hiking, canoeing, wilderness camping, swimming, nature study, picnicking, motorboating and winter snowshoeing.

From the field study, it has been possible to identify areas which may possess a major recreational potential over the long term. With the general area north of Lake Athabasca being in the Precambrian Shield, the entire area has a relatively high long term recreational potential.

Two regions within this general area which have impressive physical features such as escarpments, major fault lines, and river systems with series of rapids and waterfalls, have been demarcated on Map 6. Those areas are: the Elizabeth Falls and Woodcock Rapids area on the Fond du Lac River; and the Bulyea and Grease River region including Lefty's Falls.

B. Unique Characteristics

A major unique characteristic of the region is the large sand dune area along the southern edge of Lake Athabasca referred to as the Athabasca Sand Dunes. It is 56 miles long and averages 8 miles in width and is the largest and best example of inland dunes in North America. The two large active areas cover a 100 square mile area near the William River and a 20 square mile area near the MacFarlane River. The unique geomorphology and botany of the area present considerable interest for scientific research as well as for tourism. The desolate beauty of the sand dunes presents a contrasting picture to the surrounding lakeland and forest.

The sand dune area is bordered on the east by the spectacular MacFarlane River, which cuts a deep gorge below the high cliffs of sand and sandstone rock as it flows towards Lake Athabasca dropping through a series of falls and rapids. This river is one example of the variety and quality of the water resources in the sand dune area which may be utilized by the outdoor recreationist seeking a diversified wilderness experience. The shallow waters of the lakes, streams and rivers in the sand dunes area are warm and ideal for swimming and recreation.

There are many regions in the northern part of the provinces

as well as the North West Territories, the Yukon and Alaska which also have a relatively high long term potential for tourism. Since the areas neighbouring the Lake Athabasca region are generally similar in terms of their recreational resources, emphasis must be placed on identifying and fostering the characteristics unique to a region.

The uniqueness of the Sand Dune area and the quality and variety of the recreational resources in its vicinity represent a sufficient recreational attraction to warrant the promotion of the region on a national and global scale.

C. Frontier History

The unique history and culture of the area represent a powerful tourist attraction. The "frontier" climate of the region which has evolved from 1710 onwards still exists. The historical economy revolved around fur trading, and later, prospecting. These existing, adventurous activities may be re-captured and presented as a tourist attraction.

VI RECOMMENDED FACTORS TO FOSTER RECREATION AND TOURISM POTENTIALS

A. Road System Linking the South

The single most important factor necessary for the broadening of the tourism base in the region is a road system tying in southern centres to the region.

At present, the region is devoid of a road system linking the area to population centres to the south and as a consequence, virtually all tourist traffic to and from the area is by air. The closest summer road extension to the region is the gravel road stretching northwards from Southend on Reindeer Lake towards Collins Bay on the western shore of Wollaston Lake, a point only 12 miles from the southeastern boundary of the study area. This road, to be finished in 1972, was built when Gulf Oil commenced the development of the mineral resources in the area west of Wollaston Lake. Another road built within the last 2 years actually extends right into the study area reaching a point only 50 miles to the south of Lake Athabasca. This winter road stretches directly northward from Turnor Lake to the mineral site at Cluff Lake. (See Map 5).

The development of these two new north-south road links in northern Saskatchewan is indicative of the expanded interest and activity in the north in general. If the extension of roadways northward is in-



LEGEND

- ◆ — FAULT
- ▲ — FALLS
- — RAPIDS
- SAND DUNES

AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR:

-  — PROVINCIAL PRESERVES
-  — NATIONAL PARK

AREAS OF RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL AND
AREAS OF POSSIBLE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL PARKS

MAP

6



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evitable, it is imperative that these roadways be explicitly considered in the planning of the recreation resources of the region.

If and when roadways are built connecting southern Canada to the region, improved access and resultant lowered travelling costs would serve as a catalyst for the tourism industry, opening up the area to those in the middle and lower income brackets.

B. Integrated Resource Management Program

In general, the key to the development of the tourism potential in the region is an integrated resource management program involving the tourist industry as but one of a variety of viable economic operations.

In order for tourism to develop, a co-ordinated program of incentives would have to be initiated, drawing development capital into the region. Tourism cannot be successfully expanded without the simultaneous development of the necessary facilities which lead to a viable tourism infrastructure.

C. Human Resource Motivation

To enhance the development of tourism, an image for the region must be clearly identified, with the local people themselves "identifying with" the region and learning to think in a regional context.

If interested groups salient to the development of tourism in the region are stimulated to become involved in the decision making process, subsequent initiative can be expected to arise from local people. As a first step in developing tourism, the local people should be shown the resources which they have at their "disposal" and means by which they may benefit from improved utilization of these resources.

D. Market Research and Promotion

Market research and co-ordinated advertising programs are necessary for tourism development. Tied in with relevant information, such as future road development, research should be conducted as to the types of people who could be attracted to the region. Subsequent to this market analysis, an advertising program should be carried out, aimed at the potential tourist (depending on whether he is young or old, upper or lower income, etc.).

World wide markets should be researched and then tourism promoted according to the market analysis. Besides the United States and southern Canada, there is a potential for attracting tourists from densely populated countries in Europe and the Far East. The remoteness and spac-

iousness of the region should be promoted in highly urbanized areas.

E. Integrated Tourism Program

In order to successfully harness the tourist potential of the region, a well-planned, integrated tourist program carried out over the long term is a prerequisite. Such an ongoing tourist program would likely be managed by an official governmental body or an independent consultant, with the indigenous people of the area being significantly involved in the decision making process.

The development of tourism in the region should be such that the tourism program compliments other, competing tourist attractions in both the northern and southern regions. For example, travelling vacations or "circle tours" may be promoted which include southern park and recreation visitations with visitations to Wood Buffalo National Park and the Lake Athabasca region, using the "package plan" concept.

In developing a tourism program for the region most attention should be paid to providing an experience which cannot be found in other parts of North America. A unique identity for the region should be established and promoted, by capitalizing on those characteristics unique to the region and supplementing this attraction with some additional imaginative novelty attractions.

F. Imaginative Recreational Ideas

In addition to those activities normally associated with outdoor recreation, the region's tourist program could include such unique and distinctive novelty activities and attractions as the following:

1) Northern Summer School

A northern summer school of ecological study, an extension of a school offering fine arts, music, and ballet (such as the Banff School of Fine Arts), or an "Arctic Summer School" could be initiated. A small handicrafts industry could be a by-product of such a fine arts school.

2) Prospecting and Mining Tours

Prospecting could be highlighted as an historical activity as well as a present day activity. A prospecting course could be given with the follow-up in the field. An area of gold reserve exists

below Lake Athabasca - on the Canadian Shield. Combining the recreational experience with a useful economic activity offering a possibility of huge financial returns would be appealing to many people. In the same light, educational tours of the mine sites in the region could prove a strong attraction.

3) Frontier Museum and Town

A frontier museum could be built with emphasis on the fur trade, canoe expeditions and prospecting. An old frontier town could be reconstructed as it was in the past -- as an outdoor museum. Alternatively stores and saloons could be reconstructed as in the past and then operated on a normal basis. A fair or sports event could be held each year capitalizing on the theme identified with the area.

4) Float Plane Tours

Tours of the region may be conducted by float plane so that the diversified range of sights may be experienced within a reasonable time period. In order to fully appreciate the various natural sights of the region, the tourists could be flown into drop-off sites whereupon they would be required to hike through the wilderness to reach a particular site such as a waterfall.

Similarly hovercraft, which show every indication of being uniquely suitable for both summer and winter transportation in the area could be promoted as a unique recreational experience.

5) Subsidized Charter Flights from Overseas

In order to induce a long term tourist inflow to Canada, the government could partially subsidize charter flights, bringing overseas tourists into the country on a "package tour" basis. For overseas visitors such a package tour may include tours of specified urban areas, (social experience), park areas, (semi-wilderness experience) and isolated areas such as the Lake Athabasca Region, (wilderness experience).

Since Europeans and Japanese are accustomed to group tours involving cheaper fares and other economies of scale, the "package tour" concept may meet favorable response if promoted effectively in these market areas.

VII ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS

By definition governments must play a major role if the recreational and tourism potential of the Lake Athabasca region is to be optimally developed. It is envisioned that governments or agencies thereof will be responsible for the research of data necessary to make ultimate developmental decisions, for the development of a recreational plan within the context of an overall plan for the region, and for the implementation of the various facets of this recreational plan.

In recognition of the significant importance of the north and in response to its need for special consideration the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan has very recently enacted legislation creating the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. This new Department is expected to be intimately involved in all matters in the overseeing of integrated resource development and management of northern Saskatchewan. In view of its very recent formation no finite guidelines as to its role have been made explicit. It is anticipated, however, that this new Department will in all likelihood co-ordinate tourism and recreation development and promotion for the northern part of the Province and as such would be the official co-ordinating body.

The Department would be responsible as well for the staging of tourism development in accordance with the overall plan to develop the total resource base of the region. One of the most pressing goals of the Department should be the delineation of the areas within the region with the highest recreational and tourism potential. Once these areas are recognized and their present and future recreational potential compared against alternate uses, detailed programs as to facilities and staging can be drafted.

To ensure that such areas are optimally utilized over the longer term, it may prove necessary to designate these areas as parks or wilderness areas upon which short term mineral or other commercial developments are restricted. By defining a specific region as a park with the intention of developing facilities at a later date, guidelines are made explicit for other human and economic resource developments which are planned for a region. Furthermore, specification of an area as a park will enhance and in fact, create a demand for tourism in a region.

There is currently in existence an organization entitled the "Northern Saskatchewan Outfitters Association" whose headquarters is in

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Its membership numbers approximately 80 fishing camp operators who are widely distributed as well as largely individualistic in nature.

A strong organization even if it must be partly financially supported by the official body or other agency would greatly assist that governmental body to plan tourism on a comprehensive basis for the entire region. Local participation, better records of past and present operations as well as overall co-operation would greatly facilitate the regional planning function for tourism.

The responsibilities of the Federal Government in the Lake Athabasca region are in three areas. The identification of areas for National Parks and creation thereof is the responsibility of the Federal Government. A unique area of the calibre of the Athabasca Sand Dunes should be considered for a National Park.

The second role of the Federal Government could be the promotion of the Canadian North as a recreational and tourism area on a global scale. Although not specifically directed to the Lake Athabasca region such general promotion imbues tourists with a favorable image such that they are more responsive to specific promotional programs of individual operators and Provincial and Municipal Governments.

Being responsible for the native peoples which make up a large fraction of the population in the region, the Federal Government must maintain an interest in the sociological and economic effects of recreation and tourism development. Responsibilities in this area are shared with the Provincial and Local governments.

The sociological net effect (short and long term) of tourism development looms the most important criterion for planning tourism development. By developing a broadened tourism base for the region, the employment opportunities for the local people will be increased.

It is important to involve the native peoples in the decision making process regarding educational and manpower training programs geared towards tourism development. They must be given the option to decide their future involvement or non-involvement.

In addition to the responsibilities mentioned above, Local governments would be specifically responsible for the maintenance and aesthetic appearance of their communities such that these are assets rather than liabilities to the tourism industry.

VIII GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Situated to the north of the 58th parallel the Lake Athabasca region is characterized by its remoteness and sparse population. Present tourism activity in the region is based on the attraction of six well-attended fly-in sport fishing camps which receive a total annual visitation of approximately 1,200 persons.

Any tourism in the region other than the fly-in fishing camps is negligible. One of the main reasons for the lack of tourism is the weakness of the regional economic base due to the lack of human and physical (man-made) resources in the region.

With only one fishing camp operator out of six residing permanently within the region, it is evident that a large proportion of the profits from tourism are taken out of the region, and indeed, out of the province. The spin-offs of the present tourism activity to the local people are very minor as the only contact that these tourists have with population centres in the area is a short interlude during transit between the airfield and the fishing camp.

- If the objective is to develop the broad recreational potential of the region, the benefits of such development must be weighed against the benefits of developing another economic base for the region, and against the benefits of leaving the area in its present wilderness state. Assuming that tourism is deemed to be a desirable economic base for the region, the intensity and types of development should be explicitly stated.

Priority staging of development of the total resource base should guide the development of the tourist resources.

It should be noted that there is a substantial potential for mineral and hydroelectric development in the region. Through an integrated resource management program these industries could serve a complimentary and supportive function to tourism development rather than detract from it.

- Constraints to Tourism are:

- accessibility; no organized marketing strategy; competitive factor; lack of service facilities; weak economic base; and conflicting demands on resources.

Tourism Potentials are:

-- natural resource base; unique characteristics; and frontier history.

Factors to Foster Potentials are:

-- road system linking the south; integrated resource management program; human resource motivation; market research and promotion; integrated tourism program; and imaginative recreational ideas.

- It may be stated that the recreational potential of Lake Athabasca in itself is secondary to that of its surrounding area. Lake level changes thus have marginal if any effect on the long term future of the recreation resources of the whole region.

- Factors of national and global significance which create an identifiable image for the area are: the Sand Dunes, excellent lake region for fishing, "northern retreat" historical character, neighbouring National Park, and mineral resources of the Canadian Shield and tar sands.

- From a field study of Lake Athabasca and environs, the areas of major potential for different levels of recreation and tourism have been identified. Two areas have been identified as having sufficient recreational potential to warrant their consideration for provincial preserve areas, while a third area, the Athabasca Sand Dunes area, has been recognized as having those natural characteristics and unique qualities necessary to warrant National Park status. Those areas under consideration for Provincial Preserves are: the Bulgea - Grease River area; and the Elizabeth Falls - Woodcock Rapids area.

Further study should be carried out to qualify those areas recognized as having a major recreational potential. While a field study can identify such areas, additional research is necessary to refine the boundaries and to determine the function of these areas within an overall recreational plan for the region.

While the short term goal may be to protect and manage these areas as isolated wilderness areas, the long term goal should be to develop user-oriented facilities to allow the people of Canada and foreign countries to visit and enjoy the area.

- The eastern arm of the Fond du Lac River system possesses a major recreational potential as well as major hydroelectric potential. A comprehensive study should be undertaken to determine the best use of this valuable water resource over the long term. The concept of a development proposal which does not seriously consider the multiple-use characteristics of our natural resources has become obsolete in terms of today's enlightened approach to resource management.

Given the existing alternative possibilities for harnessing hydroelectric power in northern Saskatchewan, and in view of the high recreational potential of Elizabeth Falls and its environs, a close examination of these alternatives should be made.

- One of the most serious obstacles facing the northern tourism industry is the lack of accessibility. At present only a minute proportion of the potential tourist population is financially capable of flying into the region for purposes of recreation. Lack of good access to the area acts as a constraint to the development of a flexible tourist industry. When such major problems as these are overcome, the relatively untouched resources of the region may be developed according to the needs and wishes of the people in the region and the rest of Canada.

An example of the exciting prospects which face the tourist industry of the North is the announcement of April 8, 1972 by the Prime Minister of Canada that one could expect ten billion dollars to be spent in the next decade on the construction of a northern transport network. The Prime Minister has given a clear indication of federal government policy regarding northern development in his announcement of completing a road from Fort Simpson to the Beaufort Sea.

Besides benefitting those areas in the direct influence of the transportation system, such a system would likely benefit those regions further to the south. Depending upon the travel generated in the north on the new road system, an overflow would likely travel into areas such as the Lake Athabasca region on their outgoing or return trips. Given increased numbers of people travelling in the north, the potential for tourists making side trips to visit unique areas such as the Athabasca Sand Dunes and Wood Buffalo National Park is enhanced.

- In planning a future northern roadway into the region, a road system should be designated and routed so as to enhance rather than detract from the future recreational potential of the region.

A roadway system having a minimum number of branches would affect only a strip along its length and thus would not seriously affect most of the existing or proposed camps in the region. That is, if strict conservation principles are applied to the design and construction of a road system through the region, both touring and fly-in fishing may co-exist as exclusive activities, neither having a detrimental effect on the other.

It is felt that the region is large enough and diversified in terms of its natural resources that it is capable of supporting a broadened recreational activity base with certain activities centered in wilderness, and others in semi-wilderness or even a social setting.

- Research into global markets such as the emerging Japanese and European markets should be accelerated so that efforts to foster tourism potentials may be refined. The basic lack of understanding and research on the recreational desires and expectations of the potential overseas tourist must be overcome. Comprehensive research studies of the global tourist market should be undertaken by the federal government so that the recreational resources of international and national significance may be developed and promoted effectively.

- The recently created Department of Northern Saskatchewan of the Province of Saskatchewan may be the official body to co-ordinate tourism development of the area.

The recreation and tourism industry as any other industry in the north should serve as a vehicle for human resource development of the Native People. As well, any rights of the Native population and other local people who may want to be excluded from tourism development projects should be recognized.

Indigenous people may be well-suited to participate in certain aspects of the recreation and tourist industry. However, there is danger that the overwhelming influence of southern Canadian culture may lead to the upheaval of their own life style. Care must be taken to prevent the disintegration of the social values of the native people of the area.

A strong local tourist organization such as the fishing camp operators or outfitters should be encouraged and possibly even financially supported by the official body.

- The general character of the recreation and tourism activity in the region will not likely change significantly over the short term due to the existing weak base of tourism in the region. It is highly unlikely that the major constraints to the development of tourism such as the lack of road access, and the weakness of the regional economic base will substantially be altered over the short term.

However, over the long term, it appears that the major constraints will be overcome or at least become less significant, allowing tourism to develop as a viable economic base for the region and its peoples. If those positive factors related to the tourism potential of the region can be fostered, the long range benefits to the region may be substantial.

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NORTHERN SASKATCHEWANRECREATION AND TOURISM STUDYFishing Camp Questionnaire

A Tourism and Recreation Study is being conducted of northern Saskatchewan for the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project. The purpose of the study is to determine the tourism potential of northern Saskatchewan, and specifically the region around Lake Athabasca.

Obtaining information about fishing and recreation camps in northern Saskatchewan is an important element of the study, and this questionnaire will provide some necessary data. Your assistance in answering the following questions is asked. The questionnaire is to be filled out by the operators of fishing camps, who will provide information about the operation of their camps.

Although you may not be able to provide absolutely accurate answers to some questions, please estimate as closely as possible where you must.

Please return the questionnaire by mail as soon as possible, using the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you for your assistance.

April 1972

EPEC CONSULTING LTD.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1a. Please mark the exact location of your camp on the enclosed map.

1b. What is the latitude and longitude of your camp?

_____ ° N. latitude _____ ° W. longitude

2. In what activities do your guests participate?

E36

3. When was your camp initially opened? _____
Month Year
4. How many years has your camp been in operation? _____
Years
5. Will your camp be in operation in 1972? _____, After 1972? _____
6. What is the time period that your camp is open for business during the year?

Opening date _____
Month _____ Day _____

Closing date _____
Month Day

Period of heaviest use _____ to _____

7. How many employees work at your camp? (Number)

Local Indians & Metis

Local White people _____

Indians & Metis imported from outside

White people imported from outside

Other _____

TOTAL _____

8. What jobs are available (example: fishing guide, cook, clerks, etc); how many employees work at each job; what is the salary for each position and how long do the jobs last?

Job	No. of Employees	Monthly Wage	Length of Job
			(months)
			"
			"
			"
			"
			"

9. How many people can be accommodated at your camp at one time?

_____ (no. of people).

10. On the average how many customers do you have in one season?

_____. How many did you have in 1971? _____.

How many do you expect in 1972? _____.

11. On the average, how long do your customers stay at your camp?

_____ days.

12. Do you have any ideas that could be used to encourage customers to stay on longer at your camp? Check one or more (✓):

_____ Better facilities

_____ Lower rates

_____ Wider range of activities

_____ Other (please specify) _____

13. What percentage of your customers are:

A. Male _____%

Female _____%

B. Adult _____%

Children _____%

14. What percentage of your customers fall in the following age categories?

1 - 10 years	_____ %
11 - 20 years	_____ %
21 - 30 years	_____ %
31 - 40 years	_____ %
41 - 50 years	_____ %
51 - 60 years	_____ %
61 - 70 years	_____ %
70 and over	_____ %

15. Where do your clients come from?

Local area	_____ %	
Western Canada	_____ %	
Eastern Canada	_____ %	
North Western U.S.	_____ %	
North Middle U.S.	_____ %] _____ %
North Eastern U.S.	_____ %	
South Western U.S.	_____ %	
South Middle U.S.	_____ %] _____ %
South Eastern U.S.	_____ %	
Europe	_____ %	
Japan, Far East	_____ %	
Other(specify)	_____ %	_____

16. Do you have any idea as to the occupations of the customers that visit your camp? Please indicate the percentage of your customers in each category:

Managerial, professional businessman or private	_____ %
Sales personnel, clerical or manufacturing	_____ %
Construction, laborer	_____ %
Farming	_____ %
Housewife	_____ %
Student	_____ %
Other: (please specify) _____	_____ %

17. How much money does the average customer spend per day at your camp? \$ _____.

18. What mode of transportation do your customers use to get to your camp? Check one or more (✓):

- _____ private or chartered pontoon plane
 _____ regular scheduled air service
 _____ chartered air service
 _____ road
 _____ boat
 _____ rail
 _____ combination (specify) _____

19. What tourist services do you offer at your camp?

	Number	Cost
- modern cabins (rooms)	_____	_____ per _____
- semi-modern cabins (rooms)	_____	_____ "
- primitive cabins (rooms)	_____	_____ "
- kitchen facilities in rooms	_____	_____ "
- meal service	_____	_____ "
---- optional boating and recreational equipment rental:		
- motor boats	_____	_____ "
- row boats	_____	_____ "
- canoes	_____	_____ "
- sail boats	_____	_____ "
- houseboats	_____	_____ "
- other (specify) _____	_____	_____ "

Please circle the following:

- electricity	yes	no
- fishing guide service	yes	no
- sport equipment rental and sales	yes	no
- outpost camps	yes	no
- indoor plumbing	yes	no

20. What does a "package plan" cost at your camp?

\$_____ per _____.

What does this package plan include?

21. What services do you not offer which have been expressed as desirable by your visitors?

22. Do you have any plans for expanding your camp facilities or number of employees in the near future? _____.

a) If so, when will you begin expansion _____
Month Year

b) When do you expect to finish expansion? _____
Month Year

c) What facilities will you add to your present facilities?

.....

d) How much will it cost for you to expand your facilities?

\$ _____

e) How many new employees do you expect to be employed in your camp after you expand?

23. If you were to expand, would you expand:

a) to your present facilities.

b) to another area nearby.

If b), where would this expansion take place? _____.

Please mark location on enclosed map, using a star (*).

24. How do visitors learn of your fishing camp operation? Check one or more (✓):

☐ Your own advertising (newspaper, magazine, brochure).
☐ Advertising by the Province.
☐ Recommendation from former customers.
☐ Saskatchewan Tourist Guide
☐ Other (specify) _____

25. Could the area around your camp support other kinds of recreational activities? Check one or more (✓):

☐ hunting
☐ swimming
☐ camping
☐ hiking (nature trails)
☐ canoeing
☐ sailing
☐ cottages
☐ picnicking
☐ other (specify) _____

26. Would you consider developing additional facilities to allow people to participate in these outdoor recreational activities?
 Yes _____ No _____
 If so, which activities in your opinion would be most successful?
 List those activities, starting with the most successful:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

27. Do you consider your area as being: (check one)

☐ not scenic
☐ moderately scenic
☐ very scenic

28. Was your fishing camp profitable last year? Yes No

29. Which camps do you consider to be your strongest competition?

	Name of Camp	Location (lake river, etc.)	Name of Proprietor	Mailing Address
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

If possible, please mark the locations of these camps on the enclosed map.

30. What is the worst problem which you face in trying to get people to come to your fishing camp?

31. Would your business improve if the area was made accessible by a major road connection to the southern end of the Province?

Check (✓) one:

<input type="checkbox"/>	no improvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	very little improvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	moderate improvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	great improvement

32. How would your fishing camp operation change if the access to the south were greatly improved? (Check one or more).

☐ Would you make more profit?

☐ Would you add more facilities?

☐ Other (specify) _____

33. In order for us to get a realistic view of the overall tourism potential of northern Saskatchewan, it would be extremely helpful for us to have specific economic information on all the camps in the area. However, should you consider Question 33 to be an intrusion in your private affairs, do not answer it. All information shall be treated with the strictest confidence.

Considering the economics of your fishing camp operations, what was your gross and net income in the past, in 1971 and expected for 1972 (estimated). (Net income is defined as your gross income minus your total expenses of operation).

	Average in Past		1971		1972 (estimated)	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
	Income	Income				
\$ 0 - 3000						
\$3000 - 6000						
\$6000 - 12,000						
\$12,000 - 24,000						
\$24,000 - 48,000						
\$48,000 and over						

34. What ideas do you have to improve the tourism industry in northern Saskatchewan?
